HERBERT HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.

THE BOOK AND THE VOTE

BY THE

BISHOP OF DURHAM

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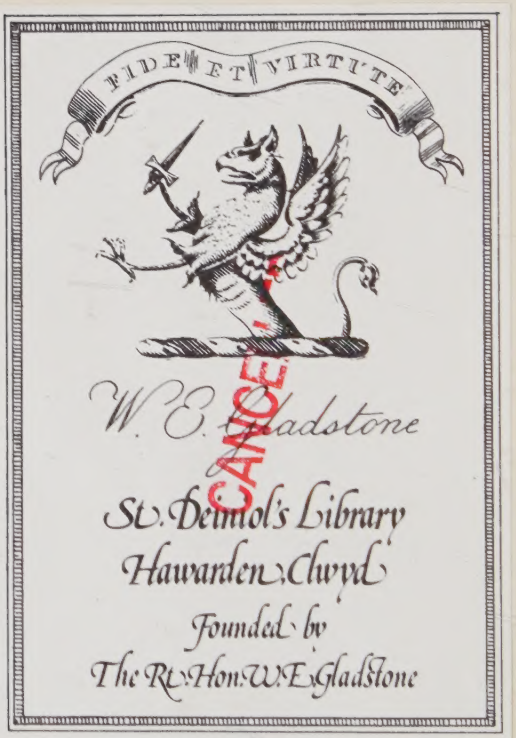
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BY
HERBERT HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
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PREFACE

I

THE debates in Parliament which took place last December will be memorable in the history of the Church of England. For they cast a strong light on the actual condition of the Church, and on the meaning of its legal Establishment. It is, perhaps, not excessive to say that the policy of Disestablishment and Disendowment, which had seemed to have receded out of sight, has suddenly resumed its place on the political stage, and for the first time been contemplated with something like sympathy by the general body of English Churchmen. There can hardly be any man to whom that policy is, and has ever been, more repugnant than to myself. The first public speech that I ever made was made in Norwich in 1886 at a meeting convened to defend the Establishment. Now, in 1928, I

find myself compelled to consider seriously a situation in which it may be my duty to confess publicly that I can no longer maintain that Establishment is consistent with the Church's self-respect. This is the more distressing to me since I cannot doubt that the practical arguments against Disestablishment and Disendowment remain as valid as they were. Indeed, in some respects they have gained in cogency, for the Church is less able to sustain the loss of its property now than then, and the nation needs more than ever the Church's ministrations. What, then, has happened to change the situation so dramatically? Two things: first, the organisation of the National Church as an autonomous denomination by the Enabling Act A.D. 1919, and next, a conflict between the autonomous Church and the House of Commons.

The Enabling Act disallowed the national theory on which the Church of England had hitherto justified its admittedly anomalous Establishment, and substituted a more coherent denominational theory with which,

however, its Establishment is now seen to be really incompatible. In these circumstances, the Church must either acquiesce in the violation of its essential rights as a spiritual society, or it must be prepared to take the consequences of refusing to do so. It is difficult to see how the former alternative could be chosen without forfeiture of self-respect; yet to choose the latter will open the door to consequences of the utmost gravity. The dilemma is cruel, and the circumstances in which it has been raised have not mitigated its cruelty.

It will not be forgotten that I did my utmost to prevent the passing of the Enabling Act. My attitude was mainly determined by the conviction that in principle that Act was an Act of Disestablishment, for, though in theory such a complete autonomy of an Established Church as exists in Scotland might exist also in England, in fact the difference in history, habit, temper, and condition between the two Churches is so profound, that the arrangement which has been

possible north of the Tweed would not be practicable south of it. My opposition was futile. The Enabling Act was passed, and it became my duty—a duty which I have striven loyally to fulfil—to accept and administer it. But events have tended as I feared, and we are now confronted by the situation which I foresaw.

II

In opening the debate in the House of Lords on December 12th, 1927, the Archbishop of Canterbury stated the rights of Parliament in terms which could hardly be more ample or more emphatic :

"We hear words which I think windy and even foolish, to the effect that this is not really a matter for Parliament, that the Church has spoken its own voice decidedly, and that the duty of Parliament is to endorse what the Church has said. I dissent altogether from that view, and dissociate myself from those statements. We are acting under what is known as the Enabling Act. That Act, as a Bill, was introduced by me at this Table some eight years ago, and I took care in introducing it (and others who followed me took the same line) to point out that, though

Parliament was, and I think most rightly, substituting a workable for an unworkable system of Church legislation, Parliament was not depriving itself in the end of any fundamental right. I adhere to that to-day. Every Member of this House has, in my view, his absolute right to vote freely upon a matter of this kind, and it would be impertinence on my part to suggest anything else."

The Archbishop proceeded, however, to add some observations which may be fairly thought to moderate this very explicit statement :

"I do consider, however, looking at the matter from what we call the moral aspect of it, that a man is bound before voting on this subject to have exercised very extreme care to know what it is that is asked for, who they are who are really asking for it, how far they have really declared themselves on behalf of the Church of which they are members, and what would be the consequences in the country of the rejection of a united wish officially given by a united Church."

Moreover it is noteworthy that later in his speech the Archbishop declined to discuss Sacramental doctrine in the House of Lords :

"I cannot go into such profound doctrines as the Presence of our Lord, in argument on the floor of this House. I am ready to do it in the right time and place, but I do not think it would be right to do it here and now."

Plainly, the " fundamental right " of Parliament, which his Grace admitted so frankly, did not extend without reserve to the subject of Christian Doctrine.

Three days later, amid scenes of considerable excitement, the House of Commons, after one night's debate, rejected the Revised Prayer Book Measure by a majority of 33. Its action was greatly resented, not as illegal, but as morally indefensible.

The rejection was criticised on two grounds, personal and constitutional. The hostile majority, it was alleged, was composed in part of men who ought to have felt themselves precluded from voting: and the character of the measure ought to have guaranteed its passage through Parliament. These two grounds are worth examining.

The Revision of the Prayer Book was a domestic concern of the Church of England, and its effect could only be felt directly by the people of England. This English Book was approved by a majority of the Members for English constituencies. It was thrown

out by the votes of Scottish, Irish, and Welsh Members, of whom many were not themselves Anglicans, and whose constituents had no immediate interest in the subject. The law indeed makes no distinction between one member and another, or between one constituency and another, or between one subject-matter and another, but a distinction is unquestionably made by equity, good sense and good feeling. Not merely Anglican sentiment, but the public conscience itself, was affronted by the ignoring of this fact. In this matter the House of Lords had set an excellent precedent. There the behaviour of non-Anglicans, as declared by the Earl of Denbigh and Earl Russell, was universally applauded. Their legal right to vote was indisputable, but their sense of fitness forbade its exercise.

"Apart from one's constitutional rights," said Earl Russell, "there are questions of one's personal feelings as to fitness and propriety, and my own feeling is—and I thought it right to state it to your Lordships—that in a discussion on the doctrine and services of a Church of which I am not a member, and whose faith I do not share, it would not be seemly that I should

take any part, and I propose therefore to express no opinion upon this Measure and to record no vote upon it."

It will perhaps be urged that the Houses are so different in composition that what may be fitting for a Peer may be wrong in a Member of the House of Commons. The one represents nobody but himself; the other represents his constituents. Are they to be practically disfranchised because their Member is personally unfit to vote on a question on which they may feel strongly, and which may affect their interests? It must be answered that the qualifications of a parliamentary candidate must be considered before he is chosen, and that his personal, as distinguished from his legal, disqualifications cannot be removed by the process of election. If an English constituency elect a Roman Catholic, or a Jew, or a Dissenter, or a Parsee, or an atheist to represent its interests in Parliament, it must be supposed to have satisfied itself that the limitations which these characters imply are outweighed by

other and more considerable merits. It cannot reasonably claim from its Member conduct which his religious description properly precludes. A Member of Parliament is something more considerable than the echo of the wishes of his constituents. His membership does not annihilate his personality, or release him from the obligations of private duty. The manly doctrine of Burke is not, we may hope, wholly obsolete in English politics, and it may require abstention from voting as well as independent voting :

" To deliver an opinion is the right of all men ; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear, and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But authoritative instructions, mandates issued, which the member is bound blindly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenour of our Constitution."[1]

It is said that Mr. Saklatvala, who is a Communist in political faith and a Parsee in

[1] *v.* Speech to the Electors of Bristol, 1774.

religious profession, was at considerable pai
to ascertain the wishes of his constituents
Battersea in order that he might expre
them accurately by his vote in Parliame
Nevertheless his name in the division list
one of the majority added a touch of humil
tion to the bitterness of defeat, and broug
home to English Churchmen with the sho
of an unpleasant surprise the grossness
the paradox which may be implicit
Establishment.

III

If, however, for the sake of argument,
admit that a Member of Parliament is
depersonalised automaton, so complete
merged in his constituents as to retain
obligations of individual conscience and pr
priety, if in Mr. Saklatvala we must not s
the Communist Parsee but only the microcos
of the majority of the Battersea electors, c
it be seriously maintained that for the se
respecting English Churchman the situati
is anywise bettered? What moral title c

these Battersea voters plead for their vote on December 15th? In the Enabling Act, Parliament accepted a definition of Churchmanship, proposed by the Church itself and certainly not lacking in generosity. Every person above the age of eighteen, of either sex, who was baptised, and would declare himself a Churchman, was entitled to claim the ecclesiastical franchise which the Act created.

The new representative assembly which was to be chosen by this electorate was not clothed with unlimited authority. Parliament retained a power of review and a right of veto; but were these universal? Were they not limited by the obvious intention of the Enabling Act? The constitution of the National Assembly as set out in the Act which legalised it defines the Assembly's functions thus:

"(i) The Assembly shall be free to discuss any proposal concerning the Church of England and to make provision in respect thereof, and where such provision requires Parliamentary sanction the authority

of Parliament shall be sought in such manner as may be prescribed by statute :

" Provided that any measure touching doctrinal formulæ or the services or ceremonies of the Church of England or the administration of the Sacraments or sacred rites thereof shall be debated and voted upon by each of the three Houses sitting separately, and shall then be either accepted or rejected by the Assembly in the terms in which it is finally proposed by the House of Bishops.

" (ii) The Assembly or any of the three Houses thereof may debate and formulate its judgment by resolution upon any matter concerning the Church of England or otherwise of religious or public interest :

" Provided that it does not belong to the functions of the Assembly to issue any statement purporting to define the doctrine of the Church of England on any question of theology, and no such statement shall be issued by the Assembly."

The Constitution further included a clause guaranteeing to the Convocations and to the Episcopate their distinctive and incommunicable powers :

" Nothing in this Constitution shall be deemed to diminish or derogate from any of the powers belonging to the Convocations of the Provinces of Canterbury and York or of any House thereof ; nor shall the Assembly exercise any power or perform any function distinctively belonging to the Bishops in right of their episcopal office."

Can it be supposed that the restrictions thus imposed on the action of the National Assembly, in which every member was a communicant, and every lay member had been chosen by baptised and professed members of the Church of England, were not even more plainly requisite in the case of the House of Commons which neither in its members nor in their constituents had any necessary connection with Christianity at all ?

There are many matters of ecclesiastical concern which affect the interests of others than those who are members of the Church of England : and, with respect to these, unchecked ecclesiastical action might too easily inflict injustice. Against that contingency the veto of Parliament is an appropriate and effective security. Take the familiar case of dividing an ancient bishopric. It needs not that a man should be an Anglican in order that he should be deeply interested in such a matter. In our cathedrals the history of the nation is gloriously symbolised. Patriotism apart from religion may object to

severance from recognised association with such a building as Winchester Cathedral. The record of localities and the achievements of families are preserved in our ancient parish churches. Sentimental and personal considerations render division, albeit urged on grounds of ecclesiastical convenience, extremely repugnant to many, perhaps (as in the case of Hereford) to most, of the people directly affected. In all such matters it is surely equitable that ecclesiastical action should be conditioned by Parliamentary consent. Parliament has exercised its veto, wisely in my judgment, in the case of Measures for breaking up the ancient Bishopric of Hereford against its will, and for selling the City churches against the desire of the parishioners. In such cases no reasonable objection on religious grounds can be urged against the action of Parliament, and no wound is inflicted thereby on any Christian conscience. But when the Revision of the Prayer Book is in question, and the manner in which provision shall be made for ministering

the Holy Communion to the Sick and Dying is brought under review, Parliament is confronted by issues which are plainly spiritual, and then to exercise its veto is to come into conflict with fundamental principles of ecclesiastical order, and to inflict a wound on the Christian conscience itself.

It is not the action of laymen which creates the difficulty, but the action of non-Christian laymen. That the Laity have a share along with the Clergy in spiritual government is the assumption of all Protestants, but that the Church, Clergy and Laity, united in corporate action, should be controlled in spiritual matters by an authority which is not Christian offends Protestants not less than other Christians.

IV

In the Middle Ages, when the Church was practically identified with the Clergy, the nation accepted without demur the control of the Hierarchy in matters of doctrine and discipline. A conflict between Church and

State on a definitely spiritual issue could not happen. The endless disputes which marked the age were concerned with the limits of the conflicting jurisdictions in that debatable land in which those jurisdictions overlapped, or they arose in connexion with the title of Church or State to the character which was asserted. Only a few heretics were eager to push the secular claim into the spiritual sphere. With the Reformation a new definition of the Church was framed, and, wherever the Reformation prevailed, accepted. The Laity succeeded in making good their claim to a share in ecclesiastical government. The change was significantly disclosed at that critical juncture in our history when Elizabeth ascended the throne of England, and for the moment the issue remained in doubt, whether the new Sovereign would take up the work of Edward VI, or persist in that of Mary. Bishop Bonner, as President of the Convocation of Canterbury, confronted the Queen's government with a formal declaration that authority in faith,

sacraments and ecclesiastical discipline belongs to the pastors of the Church and not to the Laity. The reply of the State was given in the Act which restored the Royal Supremacy affirmed by Henry VIII and abandoned by Mary.

The Royal Supremacy may be described as the triumphant vindication, under sixteenth century conditions, of the Christian Laity's right to a spiritual character. The ecclesiastical authority of Parliament, which the prudent Tudors never failed to associate with their own, was the authority of a Christian Nation. Heresy was a capital offence. Nonconformity was sternly prohibited by the law. Everybody born in England on reaching the age of sixteen was required under legal penalties to receive the Holy Communion in the parish church. A seat in the House of Commons was conditioned until 1707 (when the admission of forty-five Presbyterians from Scotland by the Act of Union destroyed the ecclesiastical unity of Parliament) by reception of the Blessed Sacrament. However

repulsive to modern notions such a system may be, its theory is intelligible enough, the Nation and the Church were assumed to be identical. Treason and dissent meant the same thing. Parliament provided a House of Laity for the National Church. Establishment on this theory was as inevitable in practice as it was satisfactory in theory. The Canons of 1604 gave it authoritative formulation. Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity" consecrated it by learning, eloquence, and piety:

"In a word, our estate is according to the pattern of God's own ancient people, which people was not part of them the commonwealth and part of them the Church of God, but the self-same people whole and entire were both under one chief Governor, on whose supreme authority they did all depend."

The objection, pressed by Papist and Puritan, that Parliament as such was unfit for such ecclesiastical functions as his theory assumed, was thus met:

"There are which wonder that we should account any statute a law, which the high court of parliament

in England hath established about the matter of church regiment; the prince and court of parliament having (as they suppose) no more lawful means to give order to the Church and clergy in these things, than they have to make laws for the hierarchies of angels in heaven: that the parliament being a mere temporal court, can neither by the law of nature, nor of God, have competent power to define of such matters; that supremacy of power in this kind cannot belong unto kings, as kings, because pagan emperors, whose princely power was notwithstanding true sovereignty, never challenged thus much over the Church: that power, in this kind, cannot be the right of any earthly crown, prince, or state, in that they be Christian, forasmuch as if they be Christians, they all owe subjection unto the pastors of their souls: that the prince thereof not having it himself cannot communicate it unto the parliament, and consequently cannot make laws, hear, or determine of the Church's regiment by himself, parliament, or any other court in such sort subjected unto him.

"The parliament of England together with the convocation annexed thereunto, is that whereupon the very essence of all government within this kingdom doth depend: it is even the body of the whole realm; it consisteth of the king, and of all that within the land are subject unto him: for they all are there present, either in person or by such as they voluntarily have derived their very personal right unto. The parliament is a court not so merely temporal as if it might meddle with nothing but only leather and wool. . . .

"The most natural and religious course in making

laws is, that the matter of them be taken from the judgment of the wisest in those things which they are to concern. In matters of God, to set down a form of public prayer, a solemn confession of the articles of Christian faith, rites, and ceremonies meet for the exercise of religion; it were unnatural not to think the pastors and bishops of our souls a great deal more fit, than men of secular trades and callings: howbeit, when all which the wisdom of all sorts can do is done for devising of laws in the Church, it is the general consent of all that giveth them the form and vigour of laws, without they could be no more unto us than the counsels of physicians to the sick: well might they seem as wholesome admonitions and instructions, but laws could they never be without consent of the whole Church, which is the only thing that bindeth each member of the Church, to be guided by them. Whereunto both nature and the practice of the Church of God set down in Scripture, is found everyway so fully consonant, that God Himself would not impose, no not His own laws upon His people by the hand of Moses, without their free and open consent. Wherefore to define and determine even of the Church's affairs by way of assent and approbation, as laws are defined of in that right of power, which doth give them the force of laws: thus to define of our Church's regiment, the parliament of England hath competent authority." [1]

At no time did the theory thus admirably expressed work satisfactorily. The national

[1] *v.* "Ecclesiastical Polity," Book VIII; *v.* "Works," ed. Keble, Vol. III, Pt. I, pp. 425, 509–513.

life, expanding and becoming ever more various and versatile, could not long be confined within such strait limits. After a century of friction, civil war, and half-hearted persecution, the only possible solution of the political problem was at last found. The Toleration Act of 1689 abandoned the assumption on which the Elizabethan Settlement, re-affirmed at the Restoration, had been arranged. The full significance of the change was not, however, immediately apparent. Not until the nineteenth century did the measure of the dissidence between the theory of the legal Establishment and the actual facts of the nation's life disclose itself. Then the Establishment was challenged in principle, and only defended on grounds of political expediency and practical utility. Two developments were synchronous and parallel—the secularisation of the State and the de-nationalisation of the Church. In the Enabling Act of 1919 an attempt was made to effect a *modus vivendi* between a secularised State and a denominational Church. The

action of the House of Commons on December 15th, 1927, registers the failure of that attempt, and reveals a situation of fundamental discord between Church and State.

V

Much was said in and out of Parliament of the position and behaviour of the Bishops. They, it would seem, are the responsible authors of the confusions in the Church. The vote of the House of Commons, we are told, was essentially a vote of censure on the Episcopal Bench. Many critics of the Episcopate would seem to go further, and to indicate that nothing short of the removal of most of the present Bishops, and the appointment in their place of new Bishops (whose Protestant character would presumably be guaranteed by Mr. Kensit and Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell), will meet the present case. It may be sufficient to reply, that the Royal Commission pointed out another cause than that of episcopal incompetence and disloyalty for the troubles in the Church of England. Obsolete rubrics,

and an impracticable legal system, and a public opinion within the Church which had long since moved beyond sixteenth and seventeenth century standards of thought and feeling, made the enforcement of the law absolutely impossible. And the revision of the Book of Common Prayer was recommended as the first step towards the creation of conditions which would at least make the restoration of discipline possible. The position of the Bishops is not rightly understood by their critics. A bishop's primary business is, not the enforcement of rubrics, though that may undoubtedly be part of his duty, but the maintenance of the Christian ministry as an effective factor in the parishes subject to his authority. Sound Protestantism, the alpha and omega of religious quality as measured by the House of Commons, is in fact no adequate guarantee of personal piety, or of intellectual equipment, or of pastoral zeal, or of parochial efficiency. The present shortage of the clergy confronts the Bishops with a very difficult situation. If the standard

of rubrical obedience which their critics propose were actually enforced, four-fifths of the English parishes would be destitute of incumbents ; and even if the Bishops in their anxiety to propitiate the apprehensions of their critics should consent to distinguish between clerical lawbreakers, condoning such offences as were agreeable to Protestanism and punishing only those which offended Protestant prejudice or habit, they would still find so many parishes deprived of their clergy that they would be quite unable to provide any ministry at all. In human affairs the line of duty is not always quite so obvious as might be desired, or be in controversy conveniently assumed. One thing at least is certain. No Episcopate can act permanently against the reason and conscience of the Church. Neither reason nor conscience would sanction the orgy of discriminating prosecutions which is the only alternative to the course which the Bishops have adopted.

Parliamentary authority over the Church of England may fairly be described as the

result of the process by which the ecclesiastical despotism of the Tudors has been reconciled with constitutional government. The Royal Supremacy at the height of its extravagant pretensions never reached to the ministering "either of God's Word or of the Sacraments." The Tudor sovereigns did not so grossly insult the conscience of their Christian subjects as to claim an unlimited authority over the Church. Article XXXVII makes this apparent to the meanest intelligence. Can the same modesty be credited to a House of Commons which allows itself to veto the action of the spiritualty on such a matter as the mode of ministering the Sacrament to the Sick and Dying? It was argued with passionate force that the Church must be held to the bond, and nowise suffered to alter the sacramental doctrine of the existing Prayer Book. The Bishops had already declared, and set on record in the Revised PrayerBook, that there was no change, but the majority of the House of Commons, including Mr. Saklatvala, knew better, and voted accordingly. It is really impossible to

imagine a more complete breach with the law and custom of our Constitution. If there be any sphere within which spiritual independence belongs to the Church of England, that sphere was invaded when the Prayer Book Measure was rejected in the House of Commons on December 15th. Yet the vindication of spiritual independence was never more clearly important than it is in this age of rapid change. The " Dead Hand " of some settlement made centuries ago, in circumstances different from those which have to be faced by the modern Church, cannot be lightly or safely allowed to arrest all progress. It is vital to the efficiency of the Church as a spiritual society that it should repudiate once and for all the claim implicit in the action of the House of Commons. If that claim were persisted in the relation between Church and State in England, which we sum up in the word Establishment, would have become inconsistent with the self-respect of a spiritual society. Establishment must be either rectified, or by the violent pro-

cess of Disestablishment, brought to an end.

The greatest issue may be raised on the smallest occasion. The consequences of human action have but small relation either to the intrinsic gravity of the action itself, or to the intentions of the actors. It is probable that no stronger advocates of Establishment exist than the Members of Parliament who have led the opposition against the Revised Prayer Book. Nevertheless they have brought the Establishment into greater danger than ever before, for even if the dispute over the Prayer Book could be arranged, the effect on the minds of English Churchmen cannot be removed. We have been forced to realise our situation, and to acknowledge that the spiritual independence which we have ever said was indispensable to the Church's efficient performance of duty, has no real existence, and that, though the Church's subjection may be mitigated by goodwill, and disguised by policy, it exists, and may any time find effective and

humiliating expression. It follows that Disestablishment and Disendowment, grievous as on many counts they cannot but be, may no longer be regarded merely as hostile expedients which loyal Anglicans can only meet with resolute opposition. They may have to be faced as providing a way of escape, perhaps the only way of escape, from a situation which wounds the Christian conscience and paralyses the spiritual witness of the Church. And there is another consideration. Even if the present dispute can be adjusted, and its graver implication ignored; if Church and State can agree to proceed on the old lines, and to forget an unpleasant episode, would not the crisis averted for the time, recur, probably in still more difficult circumstances?

VI

It has been apparent for some while that the character of the Church of England as both an Established National Church and a member, the principal member, of the

Federation of Churches, all non-established or disestablished, which forms the Anglican Communion throughout the world, has become very difficult to maintain. For while all the other Anglican Churches are fully autonomous, the Church of England (as the House of Commons has demonstrated) is held firmly to an admittedly unsatisfactory system, not only by rigid bonds of law, but also by the persistent prejudices of the non-Anglican population. The limitation of the liberty of the English Bishops is both apparent and embarrassing. It cannot but affect the discussions and decisions of the Lambeth Conference, in which for obvious reasons the English Bishops must always exercise considerable influence. The removal of this limitation would be one consequence of Disestablishment which the thoughtful English Churchman will welcome, though the Church of England may be compelled to say with the chief captain, "With a great sum obtained I this liberty."

In so far as Establishment embodies and

perpetuates insularity, it hinders the efficiency of the English Church, for insularity has been the distinctive weakness of English Churchmanship since the Reformation, and the circumstances of modern life have emphasised its gravity. The nation has long outpassed the narrow confines of the island-kingdom, and grown into an imperial race, owning and fulfilling world-wide responsibilities. Can the National Church remain, in system and temper, insular? From yet another side change has come, and must find frank recognition in the ecclesiastical system, if that system is to be adequate to the needs it is designed to satisfy.

The last century has witnessed a notable development of historical studies, and the extension of historical knowledge to the masses of the people. There has resulted something like a revolution of religious feeling. No special sanctity attaches any longer to the religious verdicts of the sixteenth century. The Reformation is seen to be no more than a local episode in the history of Christ's

Religion, and the post-Reformation epoch makes up no more than a chapter of the great Record. English folk look with kindlier and more discerning eyes on that wonderful Medieval Church, of which the artistic and architectural monuments are now universally regarded as the nation's choicest treasures. The violence of the Reformers, which wrecked the painted windows and covered the land with ruins, are more often execrated as the excesses of fanaticism, than admired as the fruits of religious zeal. Ritual, vestments, and ornate ceremonial are no longer as offensive to the English conscience as they once were. The popular habit of historic pageants has reflected and stimulated the change of taste. Modern notions of seemliness are revolted by the naked severity of Protestant worship. Insular Christianity, in short, is felt to be a contradiction in terms. At all hazards modern English Churchmen will be Catholic, claiming as their own the entire heritage of historic Christianity. This revolution of religious feeling has told

disastrously on the discipline of a Church which has had to make shift with formularies and rubrics which were framed to express the thoughts and satisfy the requirements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The interval has been marked by amazing intellectual progress, which has told potently on the theology of the Churches. The Thirty-nine Articles, composed in the middle of the sixteenth century, still constitute the confessional standard of Anglicanism. "Cracked and strained by three centuries of evasive ingenuity" (to quote the scornful phrase of James Anthony Froude), that venerable standard, in spite of its considerable merits, is really of small value as a statement of belief, and of no value at all as a protection against the distinctive errors of the modern epoch. The necessity of modernising the formularies of the Church of England is obvious and generally admitted. It follows from all this, that an ideal Revision of the Prayer Book would have a twofold character. On the one hand, it would recover the

treasures of ancient piety which were lost in the storms of the Reformation ; and, on the other hand, it would appropriate the treasures of knowledge which the masters of science have brought to the modern world. The Revised Prayer Book, which the House of Commons rejected so summarily, was a serious attempt to realise this ideal. It did recover much : it did appropriate much. It recovered and appropriated as much as the general opinion of the Church of England approved. Its final rejection would be a calamity of the first magnitude.

The Revised Prayer Book represents a delicately adjusted compromise between the various sections of the Church of England. This is, indeed, its principal merit, for the Church of England, alone among the Reformed Churches, has perpetuated the noblest feature of the Medieval Church, its comprehensiveness. Certainly the Church of England cannot afford to lose any one of its constituent parties, though to reconcile them all to a single system is to give complete

satisfaction to none of them. This character of a balanced compromise implies extreme controversial disadvantage, for it wakes no enthusiasm for its defence, while it exposes the largest possible margin for attack. The thoroughgoing representatives of Protestantism, Anglo-Catholicism, and Modernism have an easy task when they criticise the Revised Book, which is so apparently incoherent, and halts so painfully in its logic. Of these parties only one has an extensive following in the non-Anglican public, for that party, the Protestant party, has behind it the strength and prestige of a patriotic tradition. The Modernist is suspect: the Anglo-Catholic is distrusted and disliked: but the Protestant is both intelligible and approved. Nonconformity is Protestant to the backbone; and "corybantic Christianity" adds a certain fervour to the unimaginative Fundamentalism of popular Protestantism. Thus the Protestant party is strong in the constituencies, and vocal in the House of Commons. The principal

attack is directed against the alternative Order of Holy Communion and Reservation; that is, against precisely those parts of the Revised Book which are welcomed by Anglo-Catholics. Unless the Bishops are willing to accept a frankly partisan character, they cannot possibly consent to abandon the compromise character of the Book. Thus a rift has opened between the Church of England and the general sentiment of the nation; and it threatens to engulf the Establishment itself. While the popular notion of Revision, which found such vehement expression in the House of Commons, never went beyond a "short and easy way" with "Ritualists," the responsible authorities of the Church of England have aimed all along at making its formularies and ceremonial as genuinely Catholic as an unfaltering allegiance to the constitutive principles of the Reformed Church would permit; Catholic, I say, not in the pinched meaning which the hyphenated claimants to the famous name express, but in the generous

amplitude with which the Prayer Book ever uses it, and which the Lambeth Conference set itself to re-affirm.

The popular equation, Catholic = Roman Catholic, explains the alarm and resentment which the Report of the "Conversations" at Malines has aroused. I regretted intensely that those "conversations," originally inaugurated by the personal enthusiasm of Lord Halifax, received a measure of official countenance. The Archbishop of Canterbury explained in Convocation (February 6th, 1924) with care and candour the considerations which weighed with him, and none can question their force. Nevertheless, for myself, I continue to regret his Grace's action. I am still of the same opinion as I expressed publicly in *The Times* (December 31st, 1923) in a letter from which I make the following extract:

"There will be little disposition in any quarter to criticise a policy which commends itself to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and for which his Grace publicly claims 'full personal responsibility.' Nevertheless, I hold myself bound to say publicly what I have said

to his Grace privately, that it is unfortunate, to say the least, that the authorities of the Roman Church should be encouraged to think that the version of Anglicanism which commends itself to the distinguished men who, with his Grace's approval, discussed reunion at Malines with Cardinal Mercier and his colleagues, is either shared by the majority of English Churchmen or is really congruous with the official standards of the Church of England.

" With respect to the general question, I will venture to lay down three propositions :

" (1) The Church of England is not competent to negotiate with other Churches until it has cleared up its own mind and stated honestly what it stands for in Christendom. At the very moment when the Anglican standards of doctrine and discipline are ' in the melting pot ' of Revision, it is not reasonable, and cannot be fruitful, to enter into negotiations with other Churches.

" (2) Until the Bull ' Apostolicæ Curæ ' (1895), declaring Anglican Orders entirely null and void, shall have been cancelled or mitigated, discussion of Reunion with the Church of Rome cannot be properly or fruitfully undertaken. It has ever been the policy of Rome to be accommodating towards individuals, and adamantine towards Churches. We can only rightly and self-respectingly discuss Reunion on the basis of a mutual recognition of the Churches.

" (3) The ' Appeal to all Christian People,' issued by the last Lambeth Conference, is only handled fairly when it is read as a whole and its several sections given due importance. So handled it will be apparent that

the conditions of visible unity are laid down in the sixth section. Until the Roman Catholic Church can see its way to accept those conditions, it lies outside the view of the Lambeth Appeal."

As to the "conversations" themselves, and the provisional conclusions to which they led the distinguished divines who took part in them, I find myself in substantial agreement with the Primate of Ireland, whose letter to the *Irish Times* (January 23rd, 1928), expressed with characteristic strength and lucidity, appears to me quite unanswerable. It is profoundly regrettable that this curious essay in spiritual diplomatics at Malines should have occurred just at a moment when its importance was sure to be enormously exaggerated, and in connexion with a situation in which everything that inflames party feeling in the religious world is peculiarly mischievous.

In addressing the House of Lords on December 14th, I used language which made it clear that to my thinking the fate of the Revised Prayer Book in Parliament would

carry also the fate of the Establishment. On reflection I find myself compelled to reiterate that belief. This is what I said:

"The Church of England seeks the authority of Parliament for the revised Book. Why does it do that? Solely because it is established. So far as the Church is concerned, the Book has already received complete validity, but as an Established Church we are properly and rightly required to seek Parliamentary sanction for our work. Your vote to-night will raise clearly and unmistakably the issue of what establishment means.

"What is the great assumption on which establishment must rest if it is to be compatible with the self-respect of a living Church? Is it not the goodwill of the Nation towards the Church? The Church is established because the Nation really believes that the Christian Church is a valuable element in its own life, that it assists the work of the State itself, that, in the happy phrase of the philosopher Coleridge, 'not without celestial observations can even terrestrial charts be accurately constructed.' That is the assumption on which the Establishment rests. If now this Measure, which the Church of England, uttering its corporate mind constitutionally, declares to be indispensable to the efficiency of its spiritual work, shall be rejected by Parliament, how can that assumption be any longer reasonably made? Establishment will have been disclosed as merely a restraint which no self-respecting Church could rightly endure."

The untoward action of the House of

Commons has created a situation in which the first duty of the Church of England is to vindicate its spiritual independence.

I have brought together in this volume the various statements by which I have endeavoured to explain the actual changes effected by the Revision of the Prayer Book, and to urge their acceptance by the Church and the nation. I have to thank the Editor and Proprietors of the *Edinburgh Review* for kindly allowing me to reprint the article on "The Composite Book" which appeared in that journal in April, 1927: and the Editor of *The Nineteenth Century and After* for a similar courtesy in the case of the article, "The Passing of National Churches," which appeared in June, 1927.

HERBERT DUNELM.

Auckland Castle,
January 31st, 1928.

II

CHURCH AND STATE IN ENGLAND[1]

"Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?"
—Amos iii. 3

Just four centuries have passed since Tyndale published the most famous of his works, "The Obedience of a Christian Man," a composition to which the historian of English Religion will ascribe a critical importance. For in it were brought into prominence the two postulates of the English Reformation, namely, the supreme authority of Scripture in the Church, and the supreme ecclesiastical authority of the King in the State. Both postulates were to the men of the sixteenth century as novel as they were important. Indeed, they contradicted the current tradition of medieval religion so grossly that Sir

[1] Preached in Great S. Mary's, Cambridge, before the University, on the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, January 29th, 1928.

Thomas More, the ablest apologist of that religion, denounced the Reformer's work as "frantic." A curious narrative preserved by Strype, which seems to be trustworthy, attributes to Anne Boleyn the fact that this revolutionary volume was placed in the hands of Henry VIII, and records the monarch's approving judgment, "This book is for me and all kings to read."

The essence of the English Reformation is disclosed in Tyndale's argument. These two factors—a new Rule of Faith, and the ecclesiastical independence of the nation—are integral to the process. Obviously their full significance, and the conditions under which alone they could be reconciled with the historic Religion, were not immediately apparent. A century and a half of religious controversy and political development would intervene between the beginning of the English Reformation and its completion. It is a story in many chapters, and they miss its moral who do not reserve their verdict until the end. Some characteristic observations

of Mark Pattison, published in 1889, are worth recalling:

"Anglicanism is not, as is often repeated by ill-informed assailants, an artificial creation of Laud and the courtier-bishops of Charles I, but the legitimate and necessary form which the Church intelligence of England took, as soon as it had time to repose from the turbulent and volcanic upheaving of the religious revolution. Thus it is that Anglicanism has always been the religion of the educated classes exclusively. It has never at any period been national and popular, because it implies more historical information and a wider political horizon than can be possessed by the peasant and the artisan. The masses require an intuitional religion, such as is provided by the grosser forms of Dissent in Great Britain, or a ceremonial of drill and parade, such as the Latin and Greek Churches offer to their subject populations."[1]

In these words there is some prejudice and much exaggeration, but they are largely true, and at the present time remarkably apposite. Foxe's "Book of Martyrs"—which was quoted by Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell in the House of Commons—has many merits, but it is a better witness to the passions of the English

[1] *v.* "Essays," p. 267, Oxford, 1889.

Reformation than to its essential character or actual achievement. The first phase of the religious revolution, when uneducated zealots, armed with the vernacular Bibles which Luther and Tyndale had provided, confounded the established hierarchy by demonstrating the contrast between the current system and the teaching of the Apostles, was soon followed by a second phase in which the controversy was carried beyond the naked text, and demanded for its successful conduct a larger equipment than zeal and the vulgar tongue. The Reformation drew in its train a counter-Reformation, and the final outcome of a protracted conflict, marked by all the horrors of fanaticism and superstition, was rather a truce of sheer exhaustion than a decisive triumph for either side. Men acquiesced in a delimitation of ecclesiastical spheres, and were content to leave their problems unsolved. But those problems cannot be permanently ignored, and the necessity of finding their solution may disclose itself very

unexpectedly. It confronts us menacingly at the present time.

If the Scripture only be indeed the Rule of Faith, how shall its interpretation be securely determined? How shall private judgment in religion be saved from breeding public anarchy in the Church? When the œcumenical authority, whether of Pope or General Council, has been repudiated, what shall take its place? The spiritual claim of a monarch who, in Bishop Stubbs's vigorous phrase, would be "the pope, the whole pope, and something more than the pope," was too offensive to reason and conscience to survive its prodigious author. Could the Christian nation be rightly regarded as itself a completely autonomous Christian Church? The analogy of the Hebrew theocracy described in the Old Testament pointed to that conclusion, which was in fact assumed by the existing ecclesiastical settlement. To this day the Articles and Canons of the Church of England maintain the relevance of the Hebrew precedent to the case of the English

Sovereign. The theory received ludicrous expression when Archbishop Cranmer addressed to the little boy whom he was about to crown King of England an exhortation to emulate his predecessor Josiah ! The same assumption was in fact made, though with some important reservations which are too often disregarded, by Richard Hooker. His great work, " The Ecclesiastical Polity," became the classical exposition of Anglicanism. Two centuries after Hooker's death, a century after the Toleration Act had registered the nation's abandonment of Hooker's theory, Burke could maintain that " in a Christian commonwealth the Church and the State are one and the same thing, being different integral parts of the same whole."

Throughout, the political development of the nation has affected the legal constitution of the Church. " Establishment," which at first assumed the Christian character of citizenship, has been progressively transformed until at last citizenship has been completely separated from the profession of

Christianity. "Jews, Turks, Infidels and hereticks" (to use the harsh language of the Prayer Book which the Revised Book proposed to mitigate) have been admitted to the franchise, and may sit in Parliament, where they have equal right with English Churchmen to legislate for the Established Church. The paradox was not wholly undiscerned. In 1707, when the Act of Union with Scotland was under discussion in Parliament, it was pointed out that the introduction of forty-five Presbyterians into the House of Commons, which was then a purely Anglican assembly, might affect adversely the interests of the Church of England. Burnet, himself an ardent advocate of the Union, records that "it was said, here was a real danger the Church ran into, when so many votes of persons tied to presbytery were admitted to a share in the legislature." This very obvious and reasonable objection was met successfully by an appeal to the prevailing fear of the Church of Rome. "To all this," writes Burnet, "it was answered that

the chief dangers the Church was in were from France and from popery, so that whatsoever secures us from these delivered us from our justest fears." France and popery were inseparable in English minds when Louis XIV reigned in Paris, and the son of James II was seeking to regain the Crown which his father's bigoted papistry had lost. Religious prejudice grounded itself on political danger. "No Popery" was the formula of English patriotism.

The historian will note with interest that the most impassioned opponent of the Revised Prayer Book in the House of Commons was a Presbyterian, and that the burden of his successful appeal was the danger of a return to popery. The religious prejudice has outlived the political danger which created it. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes; and the children's teeth are set on edge." Prejudices which have lost their practical justifications may be slow to disappear, but they cannot ultimately survive; and we may be sure that to this general law

the "No Popery" prejudice, which has brought so much discredit to English politics, will provide no exception. A review of the last century discloses both its tenacity and its progressive enfeeblement. At every recurrent crisis, the range of its influence is seen to be more restricted, and its expression less violent. The fanatical Protestantism which so long delayed the passing of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 was a more formidable sentiment than that which met the "Papal Aggression" of 1850 by the fatuous "Ecclesiastical Titles Act" of 1851, or that which passed the futile "Public Worship Regulation Act" "to put down Ritualism" in 1874. The recent agitation against the Act relieving the Sovereign on his accession from the obligation to make a crude declaration against Roman Catholic Doctrines in Parliament, and the still more recent agitation against the Act releasing Roman Catholics from some invidious disabilities, have exhibited the "No Popery" prejudice in even more attenuated forms. In so far as the rejection

of the Revised Prayer Book is explicable as one more explosion of this expiring frenzy, I do not suppose that we need attach to it any very serious significance. If an honest misunderstanding of the Revised Book led the House of Commons to reject it, we need not despair of removing that misunderstanding by explanation. But if we must interpret the vote of December 15th as the assertion by Parliament of a claim to override the deliberate judgment of the Church of England constitutionally expressed on such unquestionably spiritual matters as the form of its Liturgy and the manner of its ministration to the Sick and Dying, then it is clear that the Church could not rightly admit that claim. Nor may we reasonably forget that if the division in the House of Commons had been restricted to the Members for English constituencies, which alone were directly interested in the matter, there would have been a substantial majority in favour of the Revised Prayer Book. It is this circumstance, perhaps, more than any other which

has directed public attention to the constitutional relations of Church and State, on which so strong a light has been unexpectedly cast. Our eyes are turned questioningly on the Establishment itself.

Has the accumulation of anomalies at last reached a point at which it plainly interferes with the practical working of the Establishment in such manner and measure as to impinge on the essential franchises of a spiritual society? Can the Church of England (i.e. the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity who together make up the Christian Society thus described) acquiesce rightly in such a subordination to the English State as the rejection of the Revised Prayer Book by the House of Commons indicates?

Before the passing of the Enabling Act of 1919, it could have been argued with much force, that Parliament was the effective, though in some obvious respects unsatisfactory, mouthpiece of the Anglican Laity, which, indeed, had no other. It was a first principle of the English Reformation that the

Laity as well as the Bishops and Clergy are entitled to a voice on spiritual matters. In acknowledging the religious authority of Parliament, and accepting reformation by Parliamentary action, the Church of England was but following the logic of its own principles. But, as we have seen, the course of political development has destroyed the competence of Parliament to represent the Laity of the National Church: and the Enabling Act was passed with the definite intention of providing a better instrument. In deference to the established position of the Church of England, the action of the newly constituted Church Assembly was conditioned by the approval of both Houses of Parliament, but it was assumed that this approval would only be refused when national interests (such as the division of Bishoprics or the sale of parish churches, which could not properly be described as spiritual) were affected. The fact once admitted that the Church of England is an autonomous spiritual society within the nation—and nothing less

was the claim which the Enabling Act was passed to satisfy—it follows necessarily that, so far as English Churchmen are concerned, the authority of the Church Assembly is final. This was the view taken by the Ecclesiastical Committee in an excellent report to which far too little attention has been given :

> " In so far as the objections which have been received consist of objections on the part of members of the Church as such, the Committee feel that in respect of this measure they themselves should be guided by the decisive conclusions of the Church Assembly, as the representative body entrusted by Parliament with the power of passing measures concerning the Church of England."

In the view of the Ecclesiastical Committee the Laity of the Church of England as such were represented in the Church Assembly, and there only. Citizenship, now recognised as carrying no ecclesiastical character, was represented in Parliament, but Churchmanship in the Church Assembly. There, and there alone, could its mind be uttered. Failing that assumption, the new machinery

would have plainly failed to remove the old anomaly for the removal of which it was created.

The issue is sufficiently clear, but the circumstances which have led to its being presented so abruptly are such that equity may well suggest to the Church some reluctance to recognise its decisive character. The title of the Church Assembly to replace Parliament as the organ of ecclesiastical legislation may be indisputable, but it is neither undisputed nor generally allowed. A surprisingly small proportion of the Parochial Electors have hitherto concerned themselves with the election of the House of Laity, and this circumstance, which of course does not invalidate the representative claim of that body, cannot but detract from the impressiveness of its decisions. Moreover, the disorders in the Church, which provided the original occasion for revising the Prayer Book, were of such a character as to excuse, if not to justify, the public exasperation which they aroused. Nor may

we rightly forget how grave to the Church would be the consequences which could not but follow a breach with the State. Disestablishment must needs draw in its train Disendowment. If it is true that material losses may never be set in the scale against moral obligations, it is not less true that the Church of England holds the endowments as a trustee for the nation, and can only take a course which might involve their loss on a clear view of spiritual duty. Would the nation gain or lose spiritually by the complaisance of the Church? That is the determining question, and to answer it rightly is extraordinarily difficult. For if the exceedingly grave consequences of Disestablishment and Disendowment both to Church and nation may well incline a responsible Christian citizen to make almost any sacrifice to avert them, it remains true that the moral quality of action must have reference to something more than the material disadvantages which it may occasion. In this case the way of surrender is for the Church so obviously the

way of secular advantage, that it must needs be morally doubtful in Christian eyes. If a decision call for sacrifice from him who makes it, the likelihood of self-deception is relatively slight: But if not? If every personal preference and interest deflect the balance of his judgment, what then? For churches and nations, as for individuals, spiritual gain is rarely served by material advantage. The very suggestion that the two coincide wakes suspicion in a considering Christian's mind.

The biographer of S. Martin records a vision which brought to the Saint the guidance which he needed, and which is not irrelevant to our own case in the present crisis. The Evil One appeared to Martin clad in royal robes, and with a diadem, and asked for the homage due to Christ.

"Martin's spiritual instinct, undeceived, declines to acknowledge him, and when rebuked, he replies that it is not in this guise that he looks for Christ, but with the show of the wounds of the Cross. And Satan vanishes."[1]

[1] *v.* "Dictionary of Christian Biography: 'Martinus.'"

Newman thought that the modern application of the legend was to intellectual temptations:

"I suppose it means in this day, that Christ comes not in pride of intellect or reputation for philosophy. These are the glittering robes in which Satan is now arraying. Many spirits are abroad, more are issuing from the pit; the credentials which they display are the precious gifts of mind, beauty, richness, depth, originality. Christian, look hard at them with Martin in silence, and ask them for the print of the nails."[1]

But Newman was a Victorian, and, when he wrote these words, a Tractarian. Had he lived in our world, a world that the Great War has disillusioned, coarsened, and stripped of ideals, he could hardly have ignored baser temptations than those he named. The reigning deity of our world is Mammon:

"Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
From heaven; for ev'n in heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent; admiring more
The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoy'd
In vision beatific."

[1] *v.* "The Church of the Fathers," by J. H. Newman.

What our world needs is some great proof that Christianity is something more than the parasite of Civilisation: that the Church of Christ is something more than the obedient tool of political and economic forces: that Discipleship is something more than a private hobby or a personal pose. In the secularised Christendom to which we belong, the ancient dualism has re-appeared. Bishop Westcott's book, "The Two Empires," must be re-written with reference, not to the Græco-Roman World, but to the Industrial Civilisation of to-day. What the Emperor Hadrian wrote in the year 134 of the cosmopolitan society of ancient Egypt might stand as a picture of modern Christendom: "The people have one god, money. Christians, Jews, every race alike, pay their devotions to this deity."[1] In this situation, then, when the atmosphere of society is so heavily charged with a sordid materialism, and so many influences bear the Church towards the comforts and conveniences

[1] The Letter to the Consul Servianus is quoted in "The Two Empires," p. 85.

of religious compromise, the demand of men's consciences for some adequate proofs of living Christianity has become imperious and urgent. Where are "The marks of Jesus" on this Church which is His Body? "The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night." We may never choose for ourselves the hour or the method of our proving. It is with Churches as with individuals. Both fail because "they know not the time of their visitation." Such reflections as these suggest, nay impose, a very grave interpretation of the conflict which has so unexpectedly broken out between Church and State in England.

For myself, I cannot hesitate to declare my belief that our duty is plain. At all costs we must vindicate the spiritual independence of the Church of England. Even if, induced by a natural reluctance to end a fellowship between the Church and the State which has its origin in the dim beginnings of our national history, and through more than thirteen centuries has been fruitful

of blessings to both, we could by concessions terminate the present dispute, is there any reason for thinking that the crucial issue has been settled? Is it not certain that it will be presented again, probably in less satisfactory circumstances, within a few years? The Church of Christ is taking again the character with respect to the general life of Christendom which it bore in the first ages with respect to the imperial world. Then its doctrine and discipline ran so plainly counter to the prevailing fashion, that Christians drew down upon themselves the weight of public odium and official hostility. How far will history repeat itself? We cannot tell, nor need we know. In any case we owe it to the nation to make clear the distinction between the Church and the State, between the requirements of Christ's Law and the conventional standards of the non-Christian world.

In "rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," we dare not refuse to God "the things that are God's." If, indeed, this

catastrophe has happened, and Church and State in England have fallen apart on a spiritual issue, our place is marked out for us. We stand with the Church.

In the performance of this duty we are plainly required to avoid everything that can obscure the essential issue, and alienate any who rightfully belong to the Cause for which we stand. The extravagant individualism which has disturbed so many parishes, and done so much to provoke the resentment of the people, is as little consistent with charity as it is with discipline. In this solemn crisis we who, as Bishops, bear the heavy and incommunicable responsibility of spiritual leadership, have a right to ask from clergy and laity such a single-minded devotion to the religious interest at stake, as shall be prepared to surrender everything save what that governing claim requires. Let me sum up all in the words of St. Paul which, though addressed to the Christians of Ephesus in the first century, serve well to point out the duty of English Christians in the twentieth:

"Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

III

PRAYER BOOK REVISION[1]

It is, perhaps, worth while to consider the authority which commends the "Composite Book" to the acceptance of English churchmen. During the twenty years which have elapsed since the work of Revision was taken in hand, the Convocations and the Church Assembly laboured long, and the result of their labours has provided the material which the Bishops have reviewed and shaped. Direct responsibility for the "Composite Book" attaches to the Bishops, but it has behind it the ascertained approbation of great bodies of churchmen. In an Episcopal Church the deliberate opinion of the Bishops can never be unimportant, but, quite apart from the authority inherent in their office, it

[1] An Address delivered to the Durham Diocesan Conference on March 26th, 1927.

may fairly be maintained that the English Bishops were not ill-qualified for the work of Revision. In a true sense they were the representatives of their dioceses, and could bring to the common task a first-hand acquaintance with local needs and circumstances. Some Bishops had been distinguished before their appointment as Head Masters of Public Schools, or Professors in the Universities, or Heads of Theological Colleges, or Preachers, or Parish Priests. Some had established an honourable reputation by published works on philosophy, theology, biblical criticism, liturgiology, and ecclesiastical history. Every type of loyal English churchmanship was represented round the table at Lambeth when the Bishops revised the Prayer Book. Their Chairman, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was a man of remarkable governing ability, of a deep personal piety always conditioned by large-minded tolerance, and an unequalled experience. Beside him sat the Archbishop of York presenting the rare combination of

great practical sagacity and exceptionally brilliant gifts. These men, the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England, thus variously qualified for their task, were swayed throughout by the single purpose of doing their duty as the responsible leaders of the Church. They prayed together, discussed together, finally agreed together with the ambition paramount in their minds that, in a crisis as grave as any recorded in the long history of the English Church, they might do their duty faithfully as Bishops and Pastors of Christ's flock. When, therefore, the " Composite Book " is fiercely denounced as the work of traitors, bent on destroying the historic character of the Church of England, it is, perhaps, sufficient to point to the compilers of the book, and to ask whether, indeed, their office, their character, their personal record, and their various qualifications, do not of themselves make such language as grotesque as it is indecent. For myself, I do not hesitate to say that in my judgment any member of the Church of

England, whether clergyman or layman, who exerts himself to secure the rejection of the Bishops' proposals is accepting a very grave responsibility indeed.

It will not have escaped your notice that the " Composite Book " appears to be equally objectionable to the extreme members of both the Protestant and the Anglo-Catholic parties. Bishop Knox and Dr. Darwell Stone, for different reasons, unite in the same condemnation. This union of opposites is very significant. Perhaps it indicates the substantial merits of the Book as forming a reasonable compromise on which loyal Anglicans of every description might agree.

There are those who find fault with the Revision as being too conservative. But they forget two things. First, that no revision can be successful which offends or outruns the general opinion of churchmen : and, next, that no revision is in such sense final as to preclude further changes in the future. The Bishops were concerned with the needs of the Church here and now. They

could not wisely anticipate the needs of future generations. "*Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*" The words are precisely relevant, for change in forms of worship is really an evil, albeit a necessary evil, since change in devotional forms, which have gathered about themselves a whole network of hallowing associations, will wound many loyal hearts, and trouble many simple minds. The Bishops never forgot that they were handling formularies designed to express the worship of Christian congregations. It was a Book of Common Prayer that was to be revised, not a Manual of Instruction, or a Code of Law. Worshippers ought not to be confronted by critical opinions, however plausible and widely held, which yet can not fairly be regarded as the final verdicts of Biblical Science. There is a latitude allowed in the sphere of devotion which may rightly be refused in the study, in the lecture-hall, and even in the pulpit.

While some persons object that the Revision has been too conservative, others with equal

insistence complain that it has been too radical. They protest that the critical handling of the Scriptures has been too drastic. The Bishops certainly were not Fundamentalists. They recognised frankly that the advance in sacred learning, which has marked the last century, has effected a notable change in our estimate of the Bible, not indeed lessening its authority as the Rule of Faith, but disallowing the treatment which it received in former ages, when Christian minds were enslaved by a rigid dogma of verbal inspiration, and men had no access to all that mass of new knowledge which is the heritage of our time. It is significant that the important change which has been made in the question addressed to the Deacon at his Ordination has commanded almost universal consent. No considering and educated Christian any more believes unfeignedly without reserve or discrimination all the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Yet the Deacon at his Ordination was required to affirm precisely such an unreserved

and indiscriminating belief. Of course a charitable casuistry came to the rescue. When I was myself an Ordination candidate forty years ago, I was assured that the categorical language of the Ordinal might be understood in the sense of the parallel question addressed to the candidate for the Priesthood. But many young men were dissatisfied with such an interpretation, which was certainly neither natural nor universally allowed. Everybody welcomes the new form of the question :

" Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament, as given of God to convey to us in many parts and in divers manners the revelation of Himself which is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ ? "

More than that no informed and thoughtful Christian can give ; less than that no self-respecting Christian Church can demand from an authorised teacher of Christ's religion.

There are those who object that the broad effect of the Revision is to " de-protestantise " the Prayer Book, both by

restoring some things which were abandoned at the Reformation (e.g. Vestments, Prayers for the Departed, and Reservation), and by cutting out of the formularies some scriptural and doctrinal features which were distinctive of the Reformation. The effect of this two-fold process has been, it is alleged, to change the established doctrine of the Church of England, and they support their complaint by reference to the Thirty-nine Articles and the Homilies. Without entering on a detailed examination of this objection (for which there is not sufficient time on this occasion), I should like to submit to you a few considerations which those who urge it appear to me either to neglect or altogether to ignore, and which, when fairly weighed, do in my judgment rob their objection of validity, and justify the Bishops' contention that the "Composite Book" preserves unchanged the doctrinal basis of the Church of England. These considerations may shortly be stated thus :

I.—*Revision itself implies a process which is*

dictated by discontent with the Prayer Book as it stands, and which is designed to remove that discontent. It has primary reference to the needs of the modern Church. Not the circumstances of the sixteenth century, nor those of the seventeenth, but those of the twentieth must determine the range and quality of the Revision.

II.—*The conditions under which the Prayer Book was originally compiled in the sixteenth century, and in which it was last revised in the seventeenth, make it highly probable that any revision satisfactory to the modern Church will necessitate precisely such reversions to pre-Reformation precedents as the "Composite Book" exhibits.* The Reformers worked under grave disadvantages. They were caught in the backwash of a violent reaction. Like the builders of the wall of Jerusalem they laboured with divided minds, "*Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon.*" Their knowledge was that of their time. The social and political circumstances in which they lived have long

vanished. As they laboured at compilation or revision they knew themselves to be serving a nation's policy as well as providing for a Church's needs. Their Book was to be imposed by civil authority on a whole people, then as now deeply divided in sentiment, habit, and belief. This policy of enforced uniformity limited their freedom while it simplified their task. All these conditions have disappeared. The Bishops could weigh the precedents of the past without being blinded by the prejudices of a great religious revolution. They worked in a tolerant age, when controversy had lost most of its old violence, and both the idea and the practice of persecution were universally condemned. They were under no obligation to contemplate other needs than those of Anglicans who were such of their own choice. It is, indeed, astonishing that the work of the English Reformers, achieved under the unfavourable conditions of their time, should be so little disfigured by partisanship and contemporary errors. No weightier evidence of its soundness can be imagined than the fact,

that it has remained untouched for more than 250 years, and that the few changes which now appear to be needed leave it substantially unaltered. Not revision has been demanded so much as addition and authorised deviation. The appeal of modern Anglicans might well find expression in the words which the "*sons of the prophets*" addressed to Elisha, "*Behold now, the place where we dwell before thee is too strait for us.*" The enlargement is demanded in two directions. On the one hand, the recovery of much which in the heat of conflict was rashly cast away; and on the other hand the recognition of much which in the movement of time has been brought to the church.

III.—*The doctrinal basis of the Church of England is not to be simply identified with the known beliefs of the Reformers, nor with the letter of the Formularies which they composed, but with these, as they have been variously glossed, and in some sense re-cast, by the history and accustomed procedure of the Church itself.* The contention of the Bishops is that the "Composite Book" expresses faithfully the mind of

the Church of England here and now: that it stands towards the Caroline Book precisely as that Book stood towards its Elizabethan predecessor, that is, leaving unaltered the doctrinal basis, but expressing a certain development which had silently changed the tone and temper of the Church. There is a new emphasis in doctrine, an enlargement of ecclesiastical interest, a distinctive note of humaneness in the revised formularies which do plainly express the modern understanding of the historic documents, and the prevailing sentiment of English Churchmen.

IV.—*If the "Composite Book" should be rejected, what will be the situation within the Church of England, and what the outlook?* The difficult venture of Revision was entered upon because it was generally maintained—by none more insistently than by those who are now foremost in denouncing the Bishops' proposals—that the disorders within the Church had become intolerable. Disobedience to the law had become so extreme that it could not

be endured without forfeiture of ecclesiastical character, and yet so general, that mere repression by process of law was no longer practicable. "Force was no remedy." The policy of prosecution had definitely broken down because disobedience to the rubrics had become almost universal, and it was impossible to distinguish between offenders without breach of equity. The Bishops have followed the bold course which the Royal Commissioners of 1906 recommended in their Report. They have reviewed the formularies, taken account of all reasonable needs, and in a large and tolerant spirit, but with an unfaltering hand, staked out the limits of liberty within the Church of England. The doctrinal basis of the Church of England, as disclosed in its history, in its formularies, in its standard divines, and in its current procedure, is not so narrow as partisans imagine. It can carry the teaching and practice of Archbishop Laud, as well as those of Archbishop Tillotson. On it may be builded the Christianity of the Cambridge Latitudinarians as well as that of

the Oxford Tractarians. It has been accepted by those who glory in the name of "Catholics," and by those who love to describe themselves as "Protestants." The Bishops were fully determined that they would sanction no narrowing of that doctrinal basis, which has made it possible for the Church of England to become the most tolerant Church in Christendom. Their aim throughout was to reconcile not to divide, to include not to exclude, to widen not to narrow, in a word, to make as sure as they could that the restoration of discipline in the National Church (which was the primary object of revision), should not compel the departure of any sincere Christian who was not plainly resolved not to respect the principles and obey the authority of the Church of England.

If, now, the Bishops' proposals are rejected, what is to be done? What are the alternative proposals of the opponents? Does any sane man suppose that the Church of England is going to come round to the type of Anglicanism represented with learning and ability

by Bishop Knox, and urged with less learning and ability by the peripatetic agitators who have left their parishes in order to preach a kind of Protestant Crusade through the country? Their freedom to cleave to the unrevised Prayer Book has been carefully secured, can they equitably ask for anything more? What is their own method of dealing with the Church of England? Do they really expect the Bishops to inaugurate a great policy of legal prosecution in order to force acquiescence in their version of Anglicanism? Can they provide sufficient clergymen of their own type to fill the vacant parishes? Can they promise a sufficient supply of Ordination Candidates pledged to their opinions? They denounce with almost equal vehemence both Anglo-Catholics and Modernists. Liberal Evangelicals they regard with extreme suspicion. How do they read the future of the Church of England? Before exerting themselves to defeat the efforts of the Bishops, they are bound to answer these questions. And if they cannot return reasonable answers,

they must be supposed to prefer the continuance of the existing disorder, which they themselves were foremost in proclaiming intolerable a few years ago.

One thing seems to me certain. Whether the "Composite Book" is legalised or not, its influence on the Church of England must be very great. It provides an authoritative answer to the question, which the prevailing disorder within the Church has raised in many minds, what does the Church of England stand for in Christendom to-day? No genuine Christian is excluded from the Church of England save only those who definitely repudiate its authority, and, under the name and pretence of Catholicism, claim and exercise an individual licence which no self-respecting Church could ever tolerate in its official representatives.

I have been much cheered during my Confirmation tours by the general approval of the "Composite Book" which the clergy of this famous diocese have freely expressed to me, and I believe that, in spite of the noisy

demonstrations of hostility which have been organised against it, the Bishops' work will command the acceptance of "all sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England."

IV

THE COMPOSITE BOOK[1]

THE "Composite Book," presented by the Archbishop to the Convocations in February, can only be fairly understood if the purpose of its compilation, and the circumstances in which that purpose was formed are kept in mind. Nine-tenths of the hostile criticisms passed upon the book will be found to imply a complete forgetfulness of these conditions of reasonable discussion. The silly clamour of the organised partisans might be ignored if it did not gather a certain strength from allying itself with two widely distributed sentiments, viz., natural conservatism and exasperation against clerical law-breaking. The circumstance that both these sentiments are commonly found to co-exist in the same

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1927.

minds adds greatly to their strength. Yet it will be regrettable if they are allowed to defeat a project commended by the deliberate wisdom and the long-continued labours of the English bishops, who, whatever their individual shortcomings, cannot fairly be denied the qualities of an honest desire to serve the Church of England, an intimate knowledge of the practical problems raised by revision, and a unique responsibility for the Church's discipline.

It is proposed in this article to recall the history of Prayer Book revision, to examine the actual contents of the Composite Book, and to indicate shortly what is conceived to be the inevitable consequences of its rejection.

The Book of Common Prayer is the supreme achievement of the English Reformation, and so long as that book retains its identity, through whatever revisions and enlargements, the Church of England will remain in the number of the Reformed Churches. Gallicanism expired when the Roman use prevailed over the local uses of France. Anglicanism

could not survive the abandonment of the local use of England. The spiritual independence of the Church of England, its competence to determine for itself the modes of its worship, and its complete equality with every other ordered Christian Church are symbolised by the Book of Common Prayer. " In short (wrote Archbishop Wake in 1718) the Church of England is free, is orthodox ; she has a plenary authority within herself, and has no need to recur to any other Church to direct her what to retain or what to do."[1]

The English Reformation demonstrated the maturity of English nationhood in the ecclesiastical sphere, as the " absolute " kingship of Henry VIII demonstrated it in the sphere of secular politics. Neither Pope nor Emperor, it was roundly asserted, had any authority within the English realm. The masterful Tudor gathered both supremacies within his

[1] Letter to Beauvoir, August 30th, 1718, printed in the Appendix to Mosheim's " Ecclesiastical History " ; ed. Stubbs, Vol. III, p. 643.

own strong hands. He was not only an emperor within his realm, but also, as Stubbs wrote, "the Pope, the whole Pope, and something more than the Pope." This exorbitant headship was as little consistent with national freedom as with Christian principle, and its inevitable limitation was disclosed in the very process of organising the independent National Church.

It became immediately apparent that a Book of Common Prayer is not merely the symbol of spiritual autonomy. It has another character, and another function. It is the manual of Christian worship, the instrument by which the clergy are to fulfil their ministry to the English people. The full title of the book is significant and suggestive: "The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the Use of the Church of England." It is apparent on the title-page of the book that the Church of England is not a merely insular product, but a part of the Church universal, whose

"Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies" it administers in its own distinctive way. It is the union of these two characters, National and Catholic, in a single institution that has been the occasion of sharp and continuing domestic dissidence through four centuries, and contributes now its most difficult element to the problem of Prayer Book revision. Emphasise unduly the national independence, and you will be in danger of breaking with the Catholic tradition; emphasise unduly the Catholic tradition, and you will jeopardise the national independence. In short, the Church of England will be dwarfed into a Protestant sect by one set of zealots; and by another it will be brought again under that papal yoke which "neither we nor our fathers were able to bear."

Historically, therefore, the Church of England has been the least united Church in Christendom. Uniformity, its cherished ideal, was precariously secured by persecution, before the Toleration Act, and since by

liberty of dissent and epidemics of prosecution. For intelligible reasons it is now universally admitted to be unattainable. The rather squalid controversies which were born of the Tractarian Movement, and found expression in a series of ritual prosecutions, did at least make so much plain. The failure of uniformity may be said to have been officially admitted in the Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline (1906):

"In the sixteenth century, when the requirement of uniformity in the Church of England received the form which it has ever since retained with little alteration, the ideas of religious liberty and toleration were, in Church and State alike, unrecognised, if not, indeed, unknown. In Church and State alike these ideas have now won their way to undisputed prevalence: and in the general life of the nation almost every restriction and disability which was at conflict with them has been removed. Doubtless in the public worship of a national Church the ideas of religious liberty and toleration are rightly bounded by the limits proper to that Church. It is nevertheless incongruous that the precise and uniform requirements which were in harmony with the Elizabethan ideas of administration should still stand as the rule for the public worship of a Church,

under altered conditions and amidst altered ways of thought. While a large comprehensiveness in matters of doctrine has grown up, the rigidity of the law as to the rites and ceremonies of the 'open prayer' which is for all 'to come unto' has been maintained. The result has been a widespread disobedience to the letter of the law, which, though acquiesced in, in quiet times, has made the enforcement of uniformity, when startling innovations rendered appeal to the law inevitable, difficult and invidious. It has proved impracticable to obtain complete obedience to the Acts of Uniformity in one particular direction, partly because it is not now, and never has been demanded in other directions."[1]

Together with the continuing domestic dissidence which, as above stated, was inherent from the first in the paradox of a Church which claimed to be both National and Catholic, another factor adverse to the stability of the Reformation settlement has to be reckoned with. Much water has flowed under London Bridge since "the Pope over the water" moved in his barge from Lambeth to Westminster to organise the revolt from Rome. Neither institutions nor ideas con-

[1] Report, p. 64.

tinue in one stay. Both are subject to that mutability which attaches to all terrestrial phenomena. Words change their meanings; doctrines lose their importance; laws are quietly cancelled by desuetude: a creeping paralysis of obsolescence grows over systems; new knowledge alters the perspective of truth; society as it develops gives birth to new ideas and new ideals. All these factors tell silently but potently on the life and worship of the Church. Wordsworth has confessed the fact of mutability in lines of imperishable beauty:

"Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whiten'd hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time."

The Great War affected the process of revision very potently, for not only did it discredit every kind of authority in Church

and State and create a new and vehement passion for "self-expression," but it stirred in serious minds a great hunger for religious agreement, and a corresponding dislike of ecclesiastical partisanship. "Reconstruction" was the "blessed word" on men's lips when, on the morrow of the supreme disaster, they contemplated a world in ruins. At least they would have done once for all with the old rotten systems which had failed so grossly! Of this phase of national feeling, at once so natural and so unreasoning, the Enabling Act is a product and a monument. With almost startling complaisance, Parliament alienated from itself its ancient control of ecclesiastical legislation. To the archaic Convocations of Canterbury and York was now added a new body, the "Church Assembly," in which all the members of the Convocations were included as "House of Clergy." Thus the clergy, sitting in two assemblies and voting in two capacities, acquired a duplicated share in the process of legislation. It was an odd, and probably unintended,

consequence of an agitation which had set "the right of the laity" in the forefront of its programme. Here it suffices to indicate the grave obstacle to effective revision which the new situation has presented.

The narrowness of the legal system, and its partial obsoleteness had the effect of fostering disloyalty in that section of the clergy which may, perhaps, be described not unfairly as the "corrupt following" of the Tractarians. They took advantage of the partial paralysis of authority in order to repudiate the pledges under which they were ordained and admitted to benefices, to flout their bishops to whom they had sworn canonical obedience, and to push forward in the parishes where they were appointed to serve a Romanising policy inconsistent with the law, history, and official standards of the Church of England, and extremely offensive to the people. The true tendency of their teaching was significantly disclosed by a series of secessions to the Roman Church, and by an insolent affectation of Roman

language and ceremonial. The English Reformation was habitually belittled, derided, and even openly repudiated, and no effort was omitted to drive a wedge between Anglicans and their Christian neighbours. Inevitably these innovating clergy came into collision with the parishioners, whose rights they ignored, whose consciences they offended, and whose legitimate preferences they overrode. The immediate occasion of the appointment of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline was the public indignation provoked by the extravagant proceedings of "Ritualist" clergymen within the parish churches, and fanned to a flame by an organised agitation which, however, was itself neither intellectually distinguished nor morally impressive.

But along with this immediate occasion went another and more weighty consideration. The scale and persistence of the disorder, the high character of many of the offending clergymen and the eminence of some, the growing indications of popular

sympathy which they evoked, and the evident dislike of coercive legal proceedings against men of piety and devotion, raised in many minds the questions whether clerical disorder might not have a deeper and worthier root than individual perverseness, and whether that root might not be removed by deliberate and reasoned concessions. This is the background of the Commission's recommendations, and discloses the main purpose with which the revision of the Prayer Book was undertaken; it also provides the standard by which the Bishops' proposals must be judged. The second recommendation of the Report (1906) runs thus:

"Letters of Business should be issued to the Convocations with instructions: (*a*) To consider the preparation of a new rubric regulating the ornaments (that is to say, the vesture) of the ministers of the Church at the times of their ministrations; and (*b*) to frame, with a view to their enactment by Parliament, such modification in the existing law relating to the conduct of Divine Service and to the ornaments and fittings of churches *as may tend to secure the greater elasticity which a reasonable recognition of the comprehensiveness*

of the Church of England and of its present needs seems to demand."

The intention of revision, then, was to terminate lawlessness in the Church of England by removing all legitimate justifications for lawlessness. Some of the rubrics were obsolete; some were obscure; some were inconvenient. Some services were objected against on reasonable grounds because they included elements which conflict with the knowledge or with the conscience of the modern Church. So much explaining away had become necessary for the relief of men of goodwill that it was impossible to resist the process when adopted by men who could not be so described. Moreover, the Prayer Book was felt to be inadequate to many modern requirements. Thus the revision took the form of a complete overhauling, both of the services and of the rubrics. When, at length, the Church Assembly and the Convocations had finished their work, the Bishops found themselves confronted by a mass of proposals which

amounted in the sum to the recasting of the book.

The Bishops went to their task on the understanding, stated publicly by the Archbishop of Canterbury, that the doctrinal basis of the Church of England should be unaltered. The legal standards were to remain, and nothing was to be proposed which could fairly be held to be inconsistent with the subscriptions exacted from the clergy at their ordination and institution to benefices. In order to remove all suspicion of harshness a pledge was given that the unrevised Prayer Book should continue to be used by all the clergy who preferred it. We may fairly assume that every clergyman who avails himself of this option, and declares his intention to use the unrevised book, will clearly understand that he will no longer be free to explain away its rubrics, to alter or mutilate or omit at will its appointed services—in a word, to perpetuate the old intolerable lawlessness which it was the professed object of revision to terminate.

What must be understood by leaving the doctrinal basis of the Prayer Book unaltered? How far is it possible for the Bishops to secure "a reasonable recognition of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England and of its present needs" without altering in some respects the doctrinal basis or balance of the Church? It must be remembered that the doctrinal basis of the Church of England has been variously understood, that much is passionately insisted upon by some Anglicans which is as passionately repudiated by others, that the justly valued comprehensiveness of the Church of England presupposes deep disagreement among its members, and that the Bishops are particularly required to guard this character of the Church.

This doctrinal dissidence has its roots deep in the past; it gives colour and distinctiveness to Anglican history; it is as inconvenient as it is irremovable. All that can fairly be asked of the Bishops is, that they shall propose nothing which can reasonably be said

to be incongruous with the English system, and out of harmony with the principles of the Church, as they are expressed in its formularies, and have been disclosed in its history. The Bishops cannot reasonably be thought to have undertaken to revise the Prayer Book without regard to the changes of belief and opinion which are distinctive of the present age, and which have necessarily affected the sense in which standards of doctrine composed in the sixteenth century are subscribed by educated men in the twentieth. Not the most vehement of those who denounce the Composite Book as involving a fatal departure from the historic Anglican position can afford to decline for himself this indispensable liberty. Who believes now, as the Reformers generally believed then, that the Bible is verbally inspired, that the Pope is Anti-Christ, that heresy is deserving of death, that all but a scanty remnant of the elect are divinely destined to hell-fire, that the mass is a soul-destroying idolatry, and a hundred other painful errors of that age? The

old standards come to us with the mitigating gloss of four progressive centuries on them, and we understand and subscribe them now in the senses which they cannot but carry. The *animus imponentis* clearly indicated by the current and authoritative teaching of the modern Church, determines the meaning which the official formularies convey to those who now subscribe them. It is precisely because there is a wide discrepancy between the legally established system and the present mind of Churchmen that the revision was taken in hand. The situation is well stated by the Commissioners of 1906 :

"The law of public worship in the Church of England is too narrow for the religious life of the present generation. It needlessly condemns much which a great section of Church people, including many of her most devoted members, value : and modern thought and feeling are characterised by a care for ceremonial, a sense of dignity in worship, and an appreciation of the continuity of the Church, which were not similarly felt at the time when the law took its present shape."[1]

The Reformation had the immediate force

[1] p. 76.

and the ultimate disadvantage of a revolutionary movement. It was carried through triumphantly on a flood-tide of enthusiasm, which has long since ebbed. Accordingly, whatever in the Reformation settlement of religion had no deeper justifications than those which the circumstances of the time and the passions which they kindled can furnish has fallen out of harmony with the general mind, become obsolete, and grown empty of value and validity. When, therefore, the work of the Reformers is reviewed to-day, it is found to be doubly defective. On the one hand, it was too indiscriminating in its destruction of the older system; on the other hand, it was too closely conditioned by the inevitable limitations—intellectual, social, political—of its authors. It follows that a revision of the Prayer Book, which was the supreme achievement of sixteenth century Anglicanism, will have both the character of a return to pre-Reformation procedure, and that of a departure from ecclesiastical precedent. The Anglo-Catholic and the

Modernist will, from their distinctive positions, advance a legitimate demand for change, but the mere conservative, who idealises the established system, and the mere partisan, whose only notion of Prayer Book revision is to sharpen the rubrics against opponents, can obviously contribute nothing to the process of revision, and will certainly find no satisfaction in its result.

History has corrected much, but it has also confirmed much. The momentous decisions of the sixteenth century, which determined the present constitution of the Church of England as a reformed and independent national Church, have been brought under the testing of experience, and we hold them to have been fully justified. We stand in line with those who rejected the authority of the Roman Pope, swept away the accumulated abuses and errors of the mediæval Church, enthroned the Bible as the sole rule of faith, denied the infallibility of all ecclesiastical authority, whether of Pontiff or

of General Council, and claimed for the Church of England, subject only to the Divine Revelation preserved in the scripture, complete spiritual independence. We hold that the development of the Roman Church during the last four centuries has added strength to the Reformers' case. In face of a popedom, claiming to be infallible, and overriding roughly both the private conscience and the traditional liberties of local churches, we renew the protest of our forefathers. As inheritors of their tradition we endorse and re-assert their claim that the Church of England is free to adopt into its practical system "things new and old"; that it is free to learn new truth, and to reject old errors; that as a Reformed Church it possesses an inalienable right to reform itself again and again, as need shall require. In such large sense we adhere to the "platform" of the Church of England as set forth historically in the formularies of the sixteenth century.

When, with these general considerations

in mind, the candid student examines the Bishops' proposals presented in the Composite Book, he will recognise in them an honest attempt to satisfy the requirements of revision as indicated by the Royal Commissioners in 1906. Both Anglo-Catholics and Modernists will find much to approve, while extremists of both these descriptions will be disappointed. The parish clergy, who for the most part are neither Anglo-Catholics nor Modernists in any partisan sense, will find much that they have long desired, and in some cases illegitimately enjoyed—shortened services, suitable prayers for many special occasions, a liberty to use extemporaneous prayer within certain limits, a clearing-up of a good many ambiguities in the rubrics. The laity will learn that arbitrary innovation on accustomed procedure, against which they have so often and so unavailingly protested, is now explicitly condemned, and that provision is made for giving the parochial Church Councils an effective voice in determining (within the large limits of the

law) the type of service in the parish churches.

Even those who are loudest in their denunciation of the Composite Book admit that most of its provisions are excellent, but they fasten upon four points which they allege to be so important that they declare their determination to wreck the whole revision rather than accept them. These are (1) the legalisation of the "Eucharistic Vestments," (2) the provision of an alternative Order for the Holy Communion, (3) Reservation, and (4) the admission of Prayers for the Departed. A brief examination of these four points will show sufficiently how unreasonable is the opposition which they have provoked.

(1) *Legalisation of the "Eucharistic Vestments."*—The new rubric runs thus:

"For the avoidance of all controversy and doubtfulness, it is hereby prescribed, that, notwithstanding anything that is elsewhere enjoined in any Rubric or Canon, the Priest, in celebrating the Holy Communion, shall wear either a surplice with stole or with scarf and hood, or a white alb plain with a vestment or cope."

For many years it has been maintained by loyal and learned Anglicans that the "Eucharistic Vestments" are required by the famous "Ornaments Rubrick" of 1662; that the 23rd Canon of 1604 (which orders the Cope at Holy Communion in Cathedrals) is properly overridden by the Act of Uniformity; that no amount of non-observance can cancel a Statute; finally, that only ignorance or prejudice can explain the judicial verdicts by which the "Eucharistic Vestments" have been declared illegal. Five very learned bishops, charged to investigate the matter, affirmed their agreement with this view, which has so generally commended itself to the parochial clergy that the vestments are now worn illegally in some 4,000 churches. In these circumstances, either the legality of the vestments must be frankly recognised, or the attempt to restore order in the Church must be abandoned. No sane man supposes that the legal prohibition of the vestments can now be enforced. If, therefore, their legalisation is to be refused, the

attempt to restore the reign of law within the Church of England must be abandoned. Is there really any fatal objection to legalising an interpretation of the Ornaments Rubrick which commands the assent of so many loyal and learned Anglicans? Why should we not bring all these conscientious law-breakers into the category of law-abiding citizens by clearing up, once for all, this calamitously ambiguous rubric? If it be urged that the vestments are worn at the Roman Mass, that they are doctrinally significant, and commonly associated with Roman error, it may suffice to answer that they are also worn by the Swedish Lutherans, who are beyond any reasonable suspicion of Roman affinities, that their doctrinal significance is energetically denied by many who wear them, and, finally, that their legalisation would go far to rectify whatever popular misapprehension might exist with respect to them.

(2) *An alternative Order for Holy Communion.*—The Bishops propose to legalise in the

Church of England a method of celebrating the Holy Communion, which not only accords more closely with the model of the primitive liturgies, but also has been long authorised in three important branches of the Anglican Communion, viz., the Episcopal Church of Scotland, the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, and the Church of South Africa. No one can seriously pretend that such legalisation will imply any change in the eucharistic doctrine of the Church of England. None can deny that it is justified by the traditional Anglican deference to the primitive models of worship. None can doubt that it is earnestly desired by great multitudes of the English clergy and laity, among whom are many scholarly persons who prefer the liturgical model of the Eastern Church to that of the Roman, with which our present Communion Order appears more closely to agree. In a revision undertaken avowedly with the object, not of narrowing the limits of Anglican liberty, but of widening them to the farthest extent compatible with Anglican principles,

in order definitely to restrain the lawless procedures [which insult those principles, how could the Bishops refuse to legalise a liturgy so primitive, so strongly entrenched in Anglican usage, and so widely desired ?

The objection to having two Orders of Holy Communion within a single Church is more specious than weighty. It exaggerates the difference between the Orders, magnifies the inconvenience involved in their co-existence, and ignores the actual situation within the Church of England. Let anyone be at the pains of comparing the two Orders in the Composite Book, regarding them, not with the jaundiced eye of a critic seeking excuses for a condemnation which he has already resolved to pass, but with the candid regard of a religious man, who would find the instrument of personal religion in the authorised liturgies of his Church, and he will wonder at the alarm professed in some quarters. In Scotland, he may have experience of a Church with two authorised liturgies, and he will not suffer any

grave inconvenience. Moreover, in practice, the change will be almost imperceptible, for in the Church of England at the present time, it would be an abuse of language to say that there is a single liturgy. Much that is reasonable is illegal, and much that is illegal is extravagant. If the Composite Book were legalised and enforced we should see an end of illegality and extravagance. But a Church of England, in which the reign of law has been re-established, will be a Church in which the law is as truly representative of the general will and conscience of Churchmen as it appears to have been in that much-abused age before the Oxford movement bisected English religion. Then there was a unanimity of Protestant sentiment: now the unanimity will have to be a willingness to acquiesce in divergences of belief and practice, and an intelligent acquiescence in the paradoxes implicit in genuine religious toleration.

(3). *Reservation.*—The Bishops propose that, under certain strictly defined conditions set out plainly in the rubrics, the clergy shall be

permitted to reserve the consecrated elements for the single purpose of communicating the sick and dying. The rubrics run thus: —

"When the Holy Communion cannot reverently or without grave difficulty be celebrated in private, and also when there are several sick persons desirous to receive the Communion on the same day, it shall be lawful for the Priest (with the consent of the sick person or persons), on any day when there is a celebration of the Holy Communion in the church, to set apart at the open Communion so much of the consecrated Bread and Wine as shall serve the sick person (or persons), and so many as shall communicate with him (if there be any). And, the open Communion ended, he shall on the same day and with as little delay as may be, go and minister the same.

* * * * *

"If further provision be needed in order to secure that any sick person in his last hour may not lack the benefit of the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, the Priest, if the Bishop shall so permit, may to that end when the Holy Communion is celebrated in the church, reserve so much of the consecrated Bread and Wine as is needed for the purpose.

* * * * *

"The consecrated Bread and Wine set apart under either of the two preceding rubrics shall be reserved

only for the Communion of the Sick, shall be administered in both kinds, and shall be used for no other purpose whatever. The Sacrament so reserved shall not be brought into connection with any service or ceremony, nor shall it be exposed or removed except in order to be received in Communion, or otherwise reverently consumed. All other questions that may arise concerning such Reservation shall be determined by rules, framed by the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province, or by Canons lawfully made by the Convocation of the Province, and subject to any such rules and Canons, by the directions of the Bishops."

Can it be said that such Reservation, so conditioned, involves any departure from established Anglican principles, although confessedly it involves a change in the authorised Anglican practice with regard to the Lord's Supper? It is certainly the case that the Church of England emphatically prohibits the cultus of the consecrated wafer which obtains in the Roman Church, which has its doctrinal basis in the medieval dogma of transubstantiation, and which finds popular expression in the modern service known as "Benediction." The 38th Article states clearly that "the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not

by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped." The phrases appear to be connected. The reservation contemplated is part of the connected series of actions which culminates in "worshipping" the wafer. The case of the sick does not come within the reference of the Article. Is there any sufficient reason for thinking that the rule of clinical celebration, which has since the Elizabethan Settlement been the recognised Anglican method of communicating the sick, needs now to be altered?

Since the Reformation, two considerable new factors have entered into the discussion of the practical question, the one social, a change of national circumstances, the other ecclesiastical, a change of clerical feeling. It is urged that the growth of great towns, which is a conspicuous feature of industrialism, has created an increased and rapidly increasing demand for the communion of the sick and dying, and that this demand has to be met by a clergy which is coming to regard with extreme disfavour any departure from the

ancient rule of "fasting communion." It is pointed out that the clergy are dwindling in number, so that if the present practice of clinical celebration is to be insisted upon as solely legitimate, the clergy will be required to celebrate often on the same day, and frequently to break their fast before doing so.

The Bishops could hardly ignore pleas so plainly reasonable, nor could they sweep aside as merely superstitious scruples which were so strongly grounded in that primitive practice to which the Church of England has ever yielded great respect. Yet they could not shut their eyes to the wide extension of sacramental devotions of the Roman type in the Anglo-Catholic churches, nor deny the formidable risk that Reservation, however carefully guarded, would be abused. They decided, however, to run the risk in order the better to rebuke the Romanising error. The rubric includes a clear and emphatic condemnation of every kind of public service or ceremony "in connection with" the

reserved Sacrament, and thus makes quite clear the position adopted by the Church of England. Reservation for the sick and dying and for no other purpose whatever may be defended on the ground which has been held to justify the retention of the indicative form of absolution in the Order of the Visitation of the Sick. Both reservation and the indicative form are difficult to justify in themselves; but both may be justified as charitable concessions to physical weakness. On the Baxterian principle of "tolerating the tolerable" the Bishops decided to concede the legitimate demand in order that they might the better restrain the superstitious excess.

(4). *Prayers for the Departed.*—The fearful experience of the Great War effected a revolution in public opinion with respect to the Church's duty towards the dead. In approving the introduction of prayers for the departed into the public services, the Bishops did but register and endorse the fact. In so doing they certainly did not trespass beyond the

frontiers of recognised Anglican teaching. The 22nd Article, indeed, condemns "the Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory," and the homily in the Second Book, which the 35th Article confirms, disallows all praying for the dead; but the first is irrelevant, since there is nothing in common between the medieval teaching about Purgatory (with which alone the Article is concerned) and such prayers for the departed as the Bishops, following the precedents of Christian antiquity, have sanctioned; and the last is negligible, since it cannot be harmonised with the language of the Prayer Book and the teaching of standard Anglican divines. "To pray for the dead is not forbidden by the New Testament," wrote Archbishop Temple in his famous Primary Charge (1898), "and it is not forbidden by the Church of England, and our ecclesiastical courts accordingly have so decided it." All that the bishops have done is to develop and make explicit the rather cryptic language of the existing book. Probably none of their proposals is more con-

gruous with the mind of religious people of every description.

It will not have escaped notice that all the four points which have provoked controversy are connected with the Holy Communion, and it is therefore easily explicable that well-meaning but rather unreflective persons should think that this circumstance indicates an escape from the unpleasant necessity of rejecting the bishops' proposals *tout court.* Why, they ask, should we not omit the Order of Holy Communion from the revising process, and sanction all the other proposals of the Composite Book ? That is obviously the line of least resistance, and as obviously it leads nowhere. For it is precisely the Order of Holy Communion which is the core of the practical problem for the solving of which the difficult process of revision was taken in hand. To leave the Holy Communion unrevised is to leave the existing intolerable disorders unremedied, and (to adopt a famous phrase from recent political history) to acknowledge that " the game of law and order

is up " in the Church of England. Those who are now foremost in denouncing the Bishops' proposals were also the foremost in protesting against the illegalities of the " ritualists." It was in response to their clamorous insistence that the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline was originally appointed ; and, in their present refusal, to accept the result of the Commission's recommendations, they are really stultifying themselves.

The Bishops of Norwich, Exeter, and Birmingham have dissociated themselves from the rest of the Episcopate. They are evidently bound to suggest some reasonable alternative to the policy which they reject. How do they themselves intend to restore discipline in the Church of England ? Does the Bishop of Norwich mean to continue indefinitely his acquiescence in the extravagant illegalities of (say) Walsingham Parish Church ? So long as the Walsingham clergy can plead that, however extravagant, they are no more *illegal* than their Anglican neighbours, it is intelligible that the bishop should

hold his hand, but he cannot (without disregard of his consecration vows) condone *permanently* the substitution of the Roman for the Anglican version of Christianity within his diocese. What is his lordship's plan for terminating the existing lawlessness, which is clearly indefensible? The Bishop of Birmingham is understood to be opposed on principle to the use of legal coercion within the ecclesiastical sphere. He prefers to rely altogether on his powers of personal persuasion. Pending their successful exercise, the intolerable anarchy, which the Bishops' proposals are meant to remove, is to continue!

Is it not apparent that, if the Bishops' proposals are defeated, and no alternative is found, the Church and nation will be reduced to the humbling necessity of enduring an unchecked clerical individualism? In short, the Church of England will become confessedly what its enemies have long declared it to be—practically a "go-as-you-please" Church, destitute of discipline and distinctive character,

a derelict in Christendom. If that is to be our fate, at least let us agree to alter the language of the Form of Consecrating Bishops in order that it may indicate more accurately the modest rôle which in such a Church is reserved for the Episcopate !

The opposition of the Evangelical party is regrettable, but not to any student of Anglican history surprising, for Evangelicalism, greatly to its own advantage, has largely left the party, which continues to exploit its name. That party is a declining force in English religion, and the consciousness of the fact may go some way towards explaining its bitterness of tone and total lack of practical wisdom. Neither its arid theology nor its fierce polemic makes appeal to the conscience of modern England. The Evangelical party in the Church of England has been described as "*an army of illiterates generalled by octogenarians.*" The description is more unkind than untrue, or rather it is only true when a sharp distinction is drawn between the Evangelical party and the Evangelicals. It fastens on the salient

features of those militant Protestants who are most insistent and clamorous in opposition to the Composite Book, most scornful of episcopal authority, and least law-abiding when the rubric crosses their own sectarian prejudices.

These "irreconcilable" partisans are the Bourbons of English religious life, for they can neither learn nor forget. Their "spiritual home" in modern Christendom is not Wittenburg, nor Geneva, nor Zurich, nor Constantinople, nor Rome, nor Canterbury, but Dainton in Tennessee. They are mostly what the Americans call "Fundamentalists," and would thrust out of the National Church, with equal fervour, both the Bishop of Birmingham and the Bishop of Truro. Fundamentalism is the same on both sides of the Atlantic, though its expressions may perhaps be less crude in England than in the more backward States of America. The historic succession of the faction is apparent in our ecclesiastical record. The "hot gospellers" of the sixteenth century, the militant sectaries of the

Commonwealth, the Protestant zealots who rioted under Lord George Gordon, the No Popery crowds which hustled Parliament into the absurdity of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act—these have their latest representatives in the followers of Mr. Kensit, and in the audiences which gather to the "Protestant Parsons" who have deserted their parishes in order to lead a "pilgrimage" through the country to the cry of "Your Church and nation in danger." Their religious kinship has never been with the Church of England, but with the "corybantic" Christianity of the sects.

A more formidable opposition is that of the Romanising section of the Anglo-Catholics, to whom the acceptance and enforcement of the Composite Book would bring the unpalatable necessity of deciding their ecclesiastical allegiance. Will they obey—or retire from—the Church of their baptism and ordination? That momentous question, hitherto obscured by a hundred sophistries, will stand out at last in naked clearness of out-

line, unmistakable and insistent. Yet it will not be easy for them to realise the necessity of decision. They have enjoyed impunity so long; they have entrenched themselves so strongly; they have gained a hold on so many clergymen; they have advanced so far in the Romeward direction that the process of "coming into line" will be extremely painful. They will be urged, and tempted, to combine in an organised resistance to the revised law. In that event the bishops will be confronted by a duty equally clear, odious, and unavoidable. Will they have the strength to attempt its fulfilment? Can they count upon the measure of support in the public opinion of the Church and of the nation which is essential to the success of their attempt? These are questions which the future must answer. The present has obligations of its own.

The evident duty of all who value the Church of England is to "count the cost" of shipwrecking the policy which the Bishops received from the Royal Commission, and have

presented as the only practical method they can devise for saving the Church of England from the weakness and scandal of domestic anarchy, and averting, even at the eleventh hour, the disaster of disruption.

V

AN OPEN LETTER TO A PEER PERPLEXED AS TO HIS VOTE ON THE REVISED PRAYER BOOK

My Dear Lord,

I can well understand that you feel considerable perplexity in deciding how you will vote when the Resolution approving the Revised Prayer Book comes before the House of Lords: and, since you have done me the honour of requesting my counsel, I will try to set out as plainly as I can the reasons why I think you ought to support the Resolution. Perhaps I shall do this best if I state shortly and simply the considerations which have led me to accept the Revised Prayer Book myself, and to advocate its acceptance by my fellow-Churchmen. For the sake of lucidity I will divide what I have to say into three parts. In the first, I will consider the situation in

which the Revision was undertaken, with reference to which it must be judged. In the next, I will deal with the Revised Prayer Book itself, and consider how far it can be said to have altered the doctrine of the Church of England. In the third, I shall try to estimate the probable effect of the Revised Prayer Book if it is legalised. I shall conclude with some general observations.

I

I am far indeed from approving the position of those ardent Churchmen who challenge the right of Parliament to override the decisions of the Church Assembly when these have been approved as constitutional by the Ecclesiastical Committee. The Enabling Act seems to me to carry on its surface the refutation of this claim. Parliament has a clear right, and an unlimited power: but whether the right should be exercised is a question which must be answered on grounds not so nakedly legal as to exclude considerations of equity, and the

high policy of patriotism. Is it a fair treatment of the Church to reject a Measure affecting so vitally its highest interests, which is so weightily supported? Can a National Church function efficiently if the nation proclaims so emphatically the withdrawal of its confidence? Can the Church of England be reasonably expected to perform its spiritual task if it be permanently deprived of the instruments which are indispensable for the purpose? Those indispensable instruments—formularies which express the mind of the modern Church, rubrics which are capable of enforcement, an episcopate clothed with sufficient legal powers and fairly sustained by public opinion in their exercise—have been confessedly lacking in recent years. The Royal Commission fastened on this fact as the principal explanation of the collapse of discipline within the Church which had become notorious and intolerable.

It is not sufficiently realised that this collapse of discipline has gone far to withdraw from the Church that public respect which is the indispensable condition of spiritual

efficiency. If the efficient working of the Church of England be a national interest of the first importance, then the restoration of discipline is a public concern, not merely a domestic affair of the Church itself. The *raison d'être* of a Christian Church is to bring Christianity effectively into human life : but that *raison d'être* is directly menaced if, for whatever reason, the Church alienates the general conscience, and becomes morally contemptible. It does not seem to me excessive to say that the effect of the disorders within the Church of England has been the loss of the people's respect. Every parish church in which Divine Worship was associated with flagrant breaches of Ordination Vows and contempt of obligations, legal and moral, insulted the general conscience by a gross paradox, lowered the credit of religion, and brought the Church into contempt ; no doubt the grossness of the paradox was mitigated by many circumstances, and excused by many sophistries. Familiarity reconciled even good men to it : and there were incidental con-

veniences which propitiated many. It was endured as a necessary evil, or defended as a useful anomaly. But at bottom the paradox remained an indefensible and enfeebling thing. For the plain man, often ignorant and bigoted but hardly ever wilfully unjust, the moral issue involved in it stood out in sharp outline, and his verdict was both prompt and severe. I believe that the clergy generally fail to realise how much moral influence they have sacrificed to their pursuit of personal preferences and professional ideals. In the interest of spiritual efficiency it is necessary that the respect of the Nation shall be recovered, and this recovery cannot be until the reproach of clerical lawlessness be taken away. The Report of the Royal Commission pointed out the requisites of a restoration of discipline: and the Revised Prayer Book has been framed on the lines therein laid down.

If you would see the new proposals in a true perspective I advise you to read over the concluding chapters of the Royal Commission's

Report, and then to add to it the commentary which the last twenty-one years have provided. You will have to recognise that every factor which made for lawlessness in 1906 is operating in 1927 with greatly increased vigour: that every consideration which extenuated, or excused, or even justified clerical lawlessness then is present in enhanced importance now. The broad effect of the Great War was to weaken discipline, to discredit authority, to stimulate a disorderly individualism alike in Church and in State. If public opinion could not be counted on to support the Bishops in coercing "Ritualists" in 1906, it is still less likely to support them in such a course in 1927. If elasticity was desirable in the ecclesiastical system as it had to be worked then, it is quite indispensable now. And there is much more to be said. It would be untrue to see in the religious development of recent years only an intensification of our difficulties. There has been growing among us a wholesome resentment of all that hinders the fellowship and co-

operation of Christians, a juster discrimination between the essentials and the non-essentials of Christ's Religion, a deeper sympathy with devotional methods, albeit in themselves unattractive, which are authenticated in the personal experience of good men, and an increasing reluctance to " quench the Spirit " by the rigidity of formal regulation. Historical studies, which have now taken a leading place in our universities, are having their effect in disgusting the people with the cold rigours of their hereditary Puritanism, and predisposing them to appreciate the numerous and varied treasures, artistic, architectural, literary, devotional, which are contained in that older Christianity, of which the Reformers, caught in the toils of a desperate conflict, could see little but the immense abuses. The old prosecuting Protestantism has perished, not so much because its formal arguments were disproved, as because its ecclesiastical standpoint has been deserted. It survives indeed in professional agitators, and their unlettered followers, but, even in

this reduced form, it is plainly on the way to die out altogether. Passionate appeals to the Smithfield burnings and the Gunpowder Plot, which two generations ago would have moved men to frenzies of excitement, now only annoy, or amuse, or anger the public, which regards them as obsolete, irrelevant, and tiresome. Among the papers in Auckland Castle is a copy of the famous letter which Lord John Russell addressed to my predecessor, Bishop Maltby, in 1850. It denounced the "papal aggression," referred to high churchmen as "unworthy sons of the Church," and described the Roman Catholic methods of worship as "the mummeries of superstition." It is quite inconceivable now that a Prime Minister should thus insult the religious convictions of large sections of the people. There has been a change in the religious climate of England. Persecution is more than ever abhorrent, but we no longer regard it as the monopoly of a Church, for we know it rather to be the feature of an age. Superstition is as heartily repudiated as before, but we perceive

its presence, less in the devotional habits of religious men, than in their religious temper.

II

These general observations will suffice to indicate the point of view from which the Revised Prayer Book ought, in my judgment, to be regarded. I advance to consider the specific objections which have been most commonly urged against it. Of these the allegation that the doctrine of the Church of England has been changed is the most important in itself, and the most generally advanced. It must be carefully considered.

Those who urge this objection can hardly intend that it should be literally pressed. Some change of doctrine, or, if that phrase be preferred, some change of emphasis on doctrine, is plainly implicit in the process of revising sixteenth century formularies in order to make them adequate to twentieth century requirements. It is precisely because the doctrine of the Church of England has changed during the

last three centuries that the formularies of the Church's worship need revision. Why is the rubric which ordered the public reading of the so-called Athanasian Creed altered so as to make it possible for that Creed to drop out of congregational use altogether? It is because the opening clauses commonly called "damnatory" have ceased to express the belief of reflecting and orthodox English Churchmen. This was the reason why the rubric had been so largely disobeyed, as many as 5,000 parish churches being, it is alleged, involved in this particular breach of the law. How could that situation be relieved except by cancelling the old compulsory Rubric? In addressing the Convocations on March 20th, 1927, I instanced as sufficient examples of the change in doctrinal emphasis which the Revision exhibits, "our whole attitude towards the Church of Rome, towards the Scriptures, and towards the conception of Divine Providence which we sum up conveniently under the name of Calvinism."

The great Hooker towered above his con-

unpardonable in charity as in learning, yet it is easy by a lengthy and laudatory argument that he can bring himself to think that devout Roman Catholics, who had never enjoyed the spiritual illumination which the Reformers possessed, may conceivably be saved. His heart accepts the conclusion which his head hardly permits:

"Let me die, if even it be proved, that simply an error (such as I judge it to be) in such a case wholly from want of light, I must confess unto you, it is an error to which I find my mind so prone, when they err, my greatest comfort is my error. . . . Let me live the love I bear unto him while I live, I would neither wish to speak nor to live."[1]

The horror of blood, from which even the great Hooker could with difficulty emancipate his mind, dominated the Reformers, and left deep traces on their work. Much was destroyed in the frenzy of that protest which we are all now agreed in regretting. Like the painted windows in our parish churches and cathedrals which were destroyed as "idolatrous," many devotional methods which had

[1] c. "Works," ed. Keble, III. Pt. II. p. 675.

nourished the piety of our forefathers were condemned and cast aside as superstitious. We now regard the medieval system without the disfiguring prejudices which obscured its merits, and we are therefore able to do better justice to our devotional heritage. Any satisfying revision of the Prayer Book could not but have the aspect of a recovery of abandoned elements, and a reversion to older models. It is worthy of notice that this change of mind is hardly less conspicuous in Presbyterians and Nonconformists than in English Churchmen. The architecture and even the arrangements of their churches, the painted windows, the trained choirs sometimes clothed in surplices, not rarely the liturgical form of the worship, attest the same abandonment of Protestant prejudices and the same reversion to an older religious tradition. The Reformation was a mingled movement as all human movements must be. On the one hand, it marked a great spiritual advance : on the other hand, it was shadowed by violence, folly and crime. There was gain :

and there was loss. In coming out of the shadows, we shall better appreciate the advance.

The advance has been continuous. If recovery of abandoned elements must be one mark of a satisfying Revision, the incorporation of new elements must be another. Here again there is necessarily a change of doctrine. What is the true significance of the alteration of the question about Holy Scripture in the Ordination of Deacons? It is nothing less than the formal acceptance of a view of the Bible which would have been unintelligible to the Reformers, and is none the less now everywhere held by educated Christians. What is implied in the corrections of text and rendering which have been made in the Epistles and Gospels? It is nothing less than the recognition of the results of Biblical Criticism. The definite provision of prayers for the Faithful Departed, the emphasis on the equality of the sexes in the revised marriage service, the omission of Calvinistic touches in the Baptismal Office,

the permission to omit the " cursing psalms " from public use—all indicate more or less obviously changes of doctrine. A careful study of the Revised Prayer Book will disclose the difference between the prevailing beliefs of the Church in the sixteenth century and those of the Church in the twentieth. The old Prayer Book has been both enriched and modernised. No Revision worth having could have omitted either enrichment or modernisation: but both processes have implied change of doctrine.

All the changes hitherto named are so generally welcome that their innovating character is easily ignored or forgotten, but this circumstance must not blind us to its significance, and certainly cannot affect its relevance to our main contention, viz., *that Prayer Book Revision cannot but involve change of doctrine.* When, therefore, it is urged as an objection against the Revised Prayer Book, that it has changed doctrine, we must suppose that the objector discriminates in his own mind between changes which are harmless and

desirable, and other changes which are of such a nature as to alter the distinctive character of Anglicanism, and to destroy the individuality of the Church of England. It is precisely the existence of such changes that the Bishops have emphatically denied. The version of Christianity set forward in the Revised Prayer Book is essentially identical with that set forward in the existing Book: and the position which the Church of England took up in the sixteenth century is maintained and re-affirmed in the twentieth. The historic protest against the Papal Claims is still made, a protest, we may observe, which so far from having become unnecessary in the course of time, has taken a new importance since those claims have during the last century been pushed to the exorbitant length of official infallibility. The Rule of Faith for English Churchmen remains the Holy Scriptures, as set out in the 6th Article. The plenary independence which the Church of England claimed and exercised at the Reformation, has been emphatically re-affirmed by the

revision of the formularies. No change in the Sacramental Doctrine of the Church has been effected. The Alternative Order of Holy Communion is more accordant with primitive models, but it implies no new theory of the Sacrament. On this point the Preface of the Revised Prayer Book is explicit :

> " If the minds of any be troubled because we have allowed another Order of Holy Communion as well as the old, and have made further provision for the communion of the sick, let them not think that we mean thereby any change of doctrine or intend that the Sacrament be used otherwise than as our Lord Himself appointed. In all things we have set before our eyes the duty of faithfulness to the teaching of Scripture and the godly and decent order of the ancient Fathers, and we pray that by God's blessing upon our work those who use this book may be enabled to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Partisans are too ready to take for granted that their own opinions are alone entitled to be regarded as permissible : but the Church of England is larger than the parties within it, and has ever permitted a wide liberty in the matter of Sacramental doctrine. She holds a middle course between the naked symbolism

of Zuinglius on the one hand, and the crude materialism of Transubstantiation on the other. These are disallowed, but between them there is a large sphere for the free play of pious belief. The admirable summary of Richard Hooker is equally just, sympathetic, and satisfying :

" What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which take them they are the body and blood of Christ, his promise in witness hereof sufficeth, his word he knoweth which way to accomplish ; why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this, O my God thou art true, O my soul thou art happy ! " [1]

The carefully guarded permission to reserve the consecrated Elements for the single purpose of communicating the Sick has seemed to lend a certain plausibility to the allegation that the Revised Prayer Book has changed the Eucharistic doctrine of the Church of England ; but reflection will disallow this impression. Professor Carnegie Simpson, a learned Presbyterian, says justly that

[1] *v.* " Ecclesiastical Polity," Book V, Chap. LXVII. The whole chapter should be read. It is most valuable.

"reservation is an extended communion," and admits that "if we deal fairly with the terms in the book we cannot say it is a denial of reformed doctrine." The permission may be abused, and, when the recent history of the Church of England is recalled, such abuse cannot be regarded as improbable, but that raises another issue. Here it is enough to insist that Reservation as permitted and conditioned by the Rubrics of the Revised Prayer Book makes no change in doctrine.

I am aware that the omission of the well-known "Black Rubrick" from the alternative Order of Holy Communion, and the language of the 28th Article have been adduced as evidences of a change in Eucharistic doctrine; but neither has any bearing on that issue. The "Black Rubrick" —which formed no part of the Elizabethan Prayer Book, and was not legalised until the Restoration—dealt with the Puritan objection to receive the Holy Communion *kneeling*. This objection retained its force for more than a century after the Elizabethan Settle-

ment. As late as 1680 there were communicants in S. Margaret's, Westminster, who refused to kneel at the Holy Communion. That scruple, so far as I know, has wholly vanished from religious minds, and, therefore, there could be no reason for reproducing the rubric which was directed to its removal. The 28th Article has no reference to the Communion of the Sick, but is concerned with the " worship " of the Reserved Sacrament, which the Revised Prayer Book clearly and categorically prohibits.

III

My Lord, I can well imagine that you have read what I have hitherto written with a growing impatience, which might express itself in some such terms as these :

" Your defence of the Revised Prayer Book may be convincing enough. I am not myself well informed on the issues involved, and I am certainly not disposed to set my opinion against the deliberate judgment of

the Bishops and Clergy, whose business it is to know. Besides I am not a very regular worshipper in any church, being much in the practice of motoring or golfing during the time of Divine Service, and therefore, whatever the clergy do, legally or illegally, will not affect me: but it is obviously wrong that the law should be disobeyed, and it is very hard on church-going people that they should not find in the churches what the Law orders. The point which will determine my vote, and, from what I can hear, the votes of many other peers, is just this—if the Revised Prayer Book is legalised, shall we see the end of law-breaking in the churches? When the Bishops shall have been armed with the new Rubrics, which they themselves assure us are capable of enforcement, will they restore discipline? What is wanted is some definite and authoritative assurance that the Revised Prayer Book will be loyally accepted, and that the new Rubrics will be enforced. Why should law-breaking clergymen be the only subjects of the

King who can break their contracts with impunity?"

Now, admitting frankly the large justification which this demand possesses, I must needs think that it is neither wholly reasonable in itself, nor quite fair to the Bishops. Your Lordship will perceive that, with the best will in the world, the Bishops cannot possibly bind their successors. The personnel of the Bench changes very rapidly. I have not yet completed ten years of my episcopate, and already I count among the senior bishops! An episcopal declaration could add nothing to the assurance of purpose which is implicit in the action of the Bishops. They have accepted the programme set out in the Report of the Royal Commission, and by revising the Prayer Book they have taken the first indispensable step of making the Rubrics capable of enforcement. They have even begun the process of recasting the Ecclesiastical Courts, which was indicated as the indispensable second step in the restoration of discipline. Meanwhile, they must be

trusted to use whatever influence, personal and official, they possess in order to bring the practice of the clergy within the limits laid down in the Revised Book. But they must not be hustled. The disordered condition of the Church of England is no mushroom growth. It has taken nearly a century to reach its present monstrous development. The ground on which the fair fabric of Discipline is to be erected is at present heavily cumbered with lawless interests, personal and congregational, which cannot possibly be cleared away at a stroke. What has taken long to grow, will take a long time to eradicate. The Bishops ask, and they are entitled to ask, for plenty of elbow-room when they get to work on their difficult task.

There are those, I know well, who are accustomed to speak of the Bishops as if they were men equally dead to the sense of their own obligations, and without title to the confidence of their fellow-citizens. But, my dear Lord, I will not insult you by supposing that you have anything in common

with these modern Marprelates. You will admit that the Report of the Royal Commission constitutes an effective explanation of the failure to enforce discipline in the past ; and that the existing disorders cannot justly be attributed to the fault of the Bishops. The situation itself made discipline impossible, and the primary object of the Revision of the Prayer Book is the removal of the principal obstacle to episcopal action. But here it is necessary to enter a caveat. The Bishops cannot consent, even in deference to popular pressure, to limit their duty to their disciplinary function. They have much else to do, much that is, perhaps, even better worth doing : and, though I think that the restoration of discipline is now the most pressing need of the Church of England, I am by no means persuaded that that end will be best or soonest gained by direct action. Such action must needs depend for its success on the extent to which it commands the approval of the public conscience : and I have very great doubt as to the likelihood

of that approval being accorded to drastic coercive action in restraint of clerical illegalities which have entrenched themselves in congregational use, and are commended by learning and personal devotion. The whole situation is extraordinarily confused, delicate, and perplexing; and the Bishops who have to handle it must in equity be allowed to handle it in the way they think best.

Leaving direct or coercive action out of reckoning, I submit that the Revised Prayer Book, if it be legalised, will tend importantly to promote the restoration of discipline. At the end of a long letter I will limit myself to stating without comment five effects which appear to me equally probable and salutary:

I.—The Bishops will possess an authoritative statement of the mind of the Church of England on the matters, ritual and ceremonial, which have been most disputed within recent years.

II.—The Revised Prayer Book will provide a test of loyalty. Anglo-Catholics, who

honestly recognise the authority of the Church of England, will have the opportunity of separating themselves decisively from Anglo-Catholics, who repudiate that authority, and substitute some other by themselves defined.

III.—The Theological Colleges will possess in the Revised Book an official version of Anglicanism which may become the basis of their training of Ordination Candidates.

IV.—The Revised Prayer Book will provide the Laity with a *locus standi* which they do not now possess. Through the Parochial Church Councils parochial grievances will be able to be formulated, and the Bishop will know what actually goes on in the parish churches.

V.—The Bishops in exercising their rubrical functions will act less individually than corporately, and thus will not only give the clergy better security against unwarrantable episcopal individualism, but will bring a weightier authority to bear on local lawlessness.

My Lord, I may not end without begging

you seriously to consider what would be the certain consequences of rejecting the Revised Prayer Book. Two are so obvious that it needs only to mention them. The existing disorders would continue and extend, all the more surely since the failure of Revision would have demonstrated the impossibility of suppressing them: and the authority of the Episcopate would have been so discredited that its restraining and directing influence, which is now the only authority left to us, would have been almost destroyed. I cannot believe that either House of Parliament would deliberately inflict on the Church of England so grave an affront and so paralysing an injury. Self-respect would compel English Churchmen to repudiate a connexion with the State which could involve for the Church such humiliation and disadvantage. After all, the effective working of the Church of England is a national concern of the first magnitude. Here, in the Revised Prayer Book, is the instrument by which, in the deliberate judgment of

the Church itself, certified constitutionally through the Convocations and the Church Assembly, and presented to Parliament by a practically united Episcopate, such effective working can be secured. Patriotism in these circumstances unites with Justice to require that the Church's judgment should be confirmed by the assent of Parliament.

I allow myself to hope, that in due course when the House of Lords is required to reach a decision on the issue, I may have the happiness of going into the same lobby with your Lordship.

I am,

My dear Lord,

Yours very sincerely,

HERBERT DUNELM.

VI

CIVILISATION AND CHRISTIANITY

The Congress Sermon, 1927[1]

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.—Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

St. Matthew v. 13, 14, 16

Nearly sixty years ago, on March 29th, 1868, Dr. Church, afterwards one of the most illustrious of the many illustrious men who have held the Deanery of St. Paul's, preached before the University of Oxford from this text a notable sermon on "Civilisation and Religion," which, in its published form, will be known to many in this congregation. The subject, profoundly interesting at all

[1] Preached to the members of the Church Congress in Ipswich, on Tuesday, October 4th, 1927.

times, seemed then to many keen observers of social life to have a special importance, challenging the anxious consideration of Christian men. For English Churchmen the situation in which the preacher was led to choose his subject was in no common degree disconcerting and perilous. The Disestablishment of the Irish Church was impending ; the shadow of secularisation was darkening over the ancient Universities ; and the Church of England was then, as so often since, distracted and humiliated by the " Ritualist " controversy.

A few weeks later, in the same year, Dr. Pusey, speaking in Oxford, at the stone-laying of Keble College, referred to " the awful life and death struggle around us and amongst us " ; and when, in the following year, Dr. Temple was nominated to the Bishopric of Exeter, the Tractarian leader was in despair. " *I must,*" he wrote, " *henceforth long, pray and work, as I can, for the severance of Church and State.*" [1] With the

[1] *v.* " Life of Pusey," Chap. LV, p. 207.

publication of "The Origin of Species" in 1859, the conflict between Faith and Science had entered an acute phase; the course of politics was apparently adverse to ecclesiastical claims and ideals; there was a widely-spread apprehension of coming disaster. Church has been described as "perhaps the most impressive preacher of his generation, the only one who suggested to his hearers the presence of a prophetic gift."[1] He was by temperament disinclined to severe and sweeping judgments; he had more sympathy with culture and science than Dr. Pusey; and he was in closer touch with the life of his time. Much that to the Oxford professor seemed sinister and suspicious had for the rector of Whatley an aspect of hopefulness. With characteristic candour he examined the situation which stirred so many fears. Civilisation had, he pointed out, largely under the influence of Christianity, acquired a character so august and beneficent as to suggest its

[1] *v.* Beeching, in the "Dictionary of National Biography."

adequacy for the satisfaction of all human needs; "Accordingly, it may be said, and certainly is sometimes thought, that civilisation does all that Christianity claims to do. It is suggested or announced that society has outgrown Christianity; that whatever benefits it once derived from Christian ideas and motives it needs no longer; that even if it learned its lessons from Christianity, yet now it is able to walk alone, to judge and deal without its teacher: that there is nothing left for the Church to do, as a moral influence on society, but what can be as well or better done by other influences, not holding of religion, or, at any rate, of definite Christianity. The virtues which men want will now grow on their own roots; civilisation is become strong enough to maintain itself, and to provide in the healthiest way for the perfection of human character."

This is the thesis which the preacher sets himself to examine. He begins by rejecting as "hazardous" the familiar method of meeting the Secularist claim with the

dogmatic assertion that "civilisation as such cannot do without Christianity." The assertion, he thinks, is probably true, but it cannot be proved, and, therefore, had better not be made. "It is enough to say that there are things of the deepest import to man and society which civilisation does not pretend to give, and which nothing can give but Christianity." He points out that the limitation of the sphere within which Christianity as such operates in society may not be wholly disadvantageous to Religion. If new obstacles are raised, old ones may be removed. We need not assume "that as civilisation increases in vigour and range and its inevitable consequences show themselves, it must displace Christianity, and narrow its influence." In two respects, at least, civilisation is, and so far as we can see, must remain, dependent on Christianity. On the one hand it saves society "from the narrowing of man's horizon" by the tendency "to put or drop out of sight the supreme value of the spiritual part of man." On the other

hand, it puts a bridle on men's sensual passions. "Purity is one of those things which Christian ideas and influences produced; it is a thing which they alone can save."

Does the argument which seemed irresistible in 1868 retain its cogency in 1927? I submit that it does, and that the development of civilisation during the last sixty years has accumulated impressive indications of its soundness. The rift between Civilisation and Christianity has widened into a breach which threatens to become total, "a great gulf fixed," but civilised mankind has hitherto failed to find any substitute for Christ's religion as the Guardian of individuality and the Controller of sensual passion. The world needs still, and more apparently than ever, the "salt" and "light" of the Church.

Civilisation has advanced in the complexity of its structure, in the extent of its authority, and in the magnitude of its claim. The activities of the State have multiplied and

developed amazingly during the last two generations; and the sphere of specifically ecclesiastical action has become correspondingly contracted. Everywhere voluntary benevolence has given way to State action financed from State funds. So far as the clergy are concerned, it is apparent that their functions have become greatly narrowed. Education has passed almost altogether out of their control in the towns; it is passing quickly out of their control in the country. The secularisation of the universities has told potently throughout the entire national system, and, for the clergy it has certainly meant restriction of opportunity, loss of social consequence, and the creation of an atmosphere unfavourable to their work. It is, of course, true that the clergy are not, as in the Middle Ages, to be identified with the Church; and yet, when the action of the Christian Society is in debate, the work of the clergy must always be of primary importance. To some extent always, in the present circumstances of the Church generally,

much social and philanthropic work, which is properly and avowedly Christian, is undertaken by layfolk, but whereas in 1868 the clergyman seemed the natural, almost the inevitable, leader in such ventures, there is now little need, and sometimes little desire, for his assistance. The entrance of the laity might be thankfully accepted as more than an equivalent for the disappearance of the clergy, if it did not coincide with a marked and quickly extending decline in the power of Christianity to shape thought and determine social practice. We are driven to inquire whether we may not be mistaken in holding Christianity so closely to its traditional expressions. These sinister signs which arrest our notice—the secularisation of the Lord's Day, the decline in attendance at public worship, the openly expressed disregard of the Christian conception of marriage, the disappearance from the " use and wont " of society of those reticences, deferences and disciplines, which were once regarded as the necessary protections of female virtue—may

they not conceivably co-exist with an unweakened hold on the fundamentals of the Christian Religion? Are they more than a rather over-emphasised reaction from unwarrantable clerical pretensions, and irrational moral conventions? Will they not, if left alone, subside in due course into a more reasonable and balanced habit, which shall express apparently that "Law of Liberty" which is a characteristically Christian paradox?

Let me say at once that I am by no means convinced that the answers to such questions ought to be as reassuring as we would wish them to be. There is something in the conditions of modern democracy which makes it, in spite of all discouragements, resolutely optimistic. Partly, perhaps, it is the inevitable ignorance of the governing majority: partly, the exaggerating habit of advertisement which belongs to competitive industrialism; partly, of course, the natural dislike of the unpalatable. However it may be explained, the optimism of modern

democracy is determined, unreasoning and incorrigible. There are not wanting those who would authenticate it by religion, and proclaim, in the name of the Crucified, a comfortable Gospel of secular progress. But I am unable to associate myself with these popular prophets. Neither the teaching of the New Testament, nor the experience of mankind, nor the evidence of Christian history, nor the suggestion of Science, so far as I can estimate any of them, bears out such a pleasing philosophy. At least, the Christian's optimism must be strictly conditioned. It must take account of ecclesiastical failure and national decline, as well as of spiritual advance and secular prosperity. The final victory may emerge out of many local defeats. Phillips Brooks used to say that the important question is whether in our admittedly checker-board world of black and white, the black squares are on a white background, or the white squares on a black background. Christians must need believe that the permanent background is white, not

black. They are assured that the ultimate Reality which sustains the Universe is good, not evil. "We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth." But the blackness of the squares is as real as the whiteness of the board; and we may not suffer Faith in the one to cancel the other.

Civilisation seemed to the Preacher in 1868 to be stricken with two maladies, for which Christianity, and Christianity alone, could provide the remedy—a materialism, which in denying the spirituality of man, destroyed his individuality, and the unchecked empire of sensual passion. I submit that civilisation as we see it in 1927 presents both these maladies in emphasised vigour, and still remains quite unable to provide any alternative to Christianity as a curative power.

That industrialism is increasingly hostile to individuality is a proposition which is little likely to be challenged by any candid student of society in Europe or America.

I may call in evidence the brilliant French writer, M. André Siegfreid, whose illuminating analysis of American society in his new work, *Les États Unis d'aujourd'hui*, merits the most careful consideration. What is the essence of his severe condemnation of the new type of civilisation which finds in the mighty Republic its most complete exposition, and now threatens to replace the ancient and various culture of Europe? It is precisely that American Civilisation is subordinating the individual so completely to the wealth-producing machine that individuality itself is perishing. Man becomes standardised like his industry; and the human spirit is actually being asphyxiated by material prosperity. The same sinister note is audible in the East, where the vast community of Russia has raised the destruction of individuality into a principle of social organisation. America with its mass-production and standardised industry, and Russia with its hideous doctrine of mechanised humanity, agree in forcing human nature

into the inexorable system which creates wealth, and in the process crushing out of it all the grace and beauty of its individuality while exalting those lower common factors which are properly bestial. The tendency of Industrialism to blunt the spiritual faculties was early perceived. In 1758 Alexander Carlyle visited Birmingham in company with his friend Home, then at the height of his brief fame as the author of "Douglas," and was taken to see a new factory which was the pride of the busy town. The poet chafed at the spectacle. "I got him, however, to go through the tedious detail, till at last he said 'that it seemed as if God had created man only for making buttons.'"[1] Protests multiplied as Industrialism developed. Wordsworth, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, bewailed the social effects of the new exaltation of wealth-creation as the Alpha and Omega of human desire—the ruthless avarice, the vulgar ostentation, the mental apathy, the deadening of the spiritual

[1] *v.* "Autobiography," ed. Burton, p. 387.

faculty, in a word, the destruction of individuality. English society, in the grave poet's view, had become a living commentary on the Apostle's text, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil";

> "No grandeur now in nature or in book
> Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense
> This is idolatry; and these we adore."

When from the peril to individuality we pass to the other feature of modern society in which the Preacher of 1868 perceived the evidence of a malady beyond the power of civilisation to cure—I mean, the reign of sensual passion—I submit that in 1927 we find that his argument, so far from having lost relevance, has gained a terrible emphasis. Christendom, in parting company with Christianity, is restoring the features of pre-Christian Civilisation—its essential cruelty, its profound pessimism, its prevalence of suicide, its squalid superstition, above all, its unbridled sensuality. In his admirable romance "Callista,"

Cardinal Newman has pictured with a master's hand the spectacle of corrupt suggestion which an ancient city presented to its inhabitants :

"Fearful sights—not here and there, but on the stateliest structures and in the meanest hovels, in public offices and private houses, in central spots and at the corners of the streets, in bazaars and shops and house-doors, in the rudest workmanship and in the highest art, in letters or in emblems or in paintings—the insignia and the pomp of Satan and of Belial, of a reign of corruption and a revel of idolatry which you can neither endure nor escape. Wherever you go it is all the same, in the police-court on the right, in the military station on the left, in the crowd round the temple, in the procession with its victims and its worshippers who walk to music, in the language of the noisy market people ; wherever you go you are accosted, confronted, publicly, shamelessly, now as if a precept of religion, now as if a homage of nature, by all which, as a Christian, you shrink from and adjure."[1]

We may fairly think that the great Master of Style has sacrificed accuracy to effect, and omitted from his picture of Græco-Roman Society some features which mitigated its grossness : yet can the student of antiquity

[1] *v.* "Callista," p. 114, New Edition, 1800.

deny that broadly the portrait is faithful? "The whole world lieth in the evil one," wrote one who had known it well. Perhaps India, if due allowance be made for the difference between East and West, presents the nearest modern parallel to that ancient world into which Christianity came as "Salt" and "Light." We have been startled by the unvarnished portrait of that vast community which a keen American observer has recently given us in "Mother India." "Sexuality," said one who knows India, "is the dominant note of Indian life." Is anyone disposed to resent as intolerably extravagant the suggestion that the civilisation of the West can ever fall so far apart from the Christian tradition as to bring back the crude licence of ancient paganism? I ask you to consider carefully what is now happening in Russia, where Western theories are being expressed in practice with the brutality and lack of discrimination which are distinctive of the Slav genius. Read the careful study of the Russian experiment by

Fülöp-Miller in the remarkable volume—*The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*—of which an excellent English translation has recently issued from the Press, and note especially the chapter headed "The Revolutionising of Everyday Life." You will not doubt the justice of the author's description of Bolshevism as "a momentous problem of civilisation as a whole." The author tells us that "all the attempted reforms of the Bolsheviks seem harmless, even commonplace, compared to the changes which they have introduced in the relations of the sexes"; that the practical abolition of marriage "has been accompanied by incalculable consequences"; that "in this heavy sexual atmosphere suicides abound." He warns us that "there is no public criticism in Soviet Russia, so all the newspaper accounts of occurrences of this kind are influenced by the Government." "This is the only possible explanation of the fact that you find only reproaches against "disgusting bourgeois ideas," and no unprejudiced judgments on the unparalleled

debauchery and its immeasurably harmful effects on the young." [1]

Does anyone pretend to believe that, because the Russians are comparatively backward and even barbarous, their experience can have no significance for English folk? I beg you to consider the great and sinister influence which the Bolshevik Experiment has already had on the political and economic life of this country. To my thinking, the saddest and most menacing feature of the intimacy between organised labour in Britain and Bolshevism in Russia is the complete absence, so far as I have observed, of any indication of disgust, or resentment, or alarm, at the Bolshevik treatment of religion, marriage and childhood. No doubt much is to be allowed for the ignorance of our people, and perhaps more for the incredulity which has its roots in that ignorance, but even so, the complaisance of British workmen in face of the Russian repudiation of the Christian tradition is as melancholy as it is surprising.

[1] *v.* "The Mind and Face of Bolshevism," p. 201.

But, even if Russia be left out of the reckoning, is there no reason for apprehension here among ourselves? Consider the treatment of sex relations in current literature, and in the conversation of society. Be at the pains to appreciate the testimonies of your own time and country. I do not see how any candid, competently informed, and intelligent student of our civilisation can deny that a great revolt against the morality of Christ's religion is proceeding within it, and has in recent years gained a formidable force. By its disregard of man's spiritual nature, civilisation is both menacing his individuality and stimulating his passions, and by so doing is moving quickly towards social disintegration and decay. If, indeed, this be the true state of the case, then consider how solemn a responsibility rests on the Christian society, and here in our country on the Church of England. For verily our Lord's words to His disciples come to us across the centuries with direct and evident application, and His stern warning has an

apparent and terrible relevancy to ourselves. How far, as matters now stand in England, is the Church recognisably the "Salt" and "Light" of society? When that question is seriously proposed, the true significance of current events is disclosed, and our duty begins to take shape in a just perspective. We realise the gravity which attaches to any breach between the Church and the national conscience. We perceive that it is precisely such a breach which has been created by our divisions, and by our strange absorption in relatively petty concerns. It becomes clear to us that our allegiance to Christ requires that we should take away the stumbling-blocks which we ourselves have created.

This—if you will permit me an almost inevitable reference—is the essential significance of Prayer Book Revision. The real opposition to the Revised Book is the widely distributed resentment against the unfairness of illegal innovations, and the union of breach of contract with spiritual office. That resentment, long suppressed, is finding expression

in a refusal to endorse anything which, however reasonable and salutary in itself, has the aspect of a concession to the law-breaking clergy. "The Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Are we—the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Church of England—really determined, in a penitent and resolute spirit, to roll away the reproach of our sinful and selfish individualism, and to restore discipline within the Church, so that, without the disgrace and dissipation of energy which our disorders have so long occasioned, we may address ourselves with single-minded devotion to the task to which we are divinely called, viz. the vindication in our difficult modern world of the spiritual franchise of men, and the making them able by Christ's Grace, to bridle their sensual appetites? Thus will the Church be indeed the "Salt" and "Light" of English society; and Christianity, with its gifts of Liberty and Law, shall make it possible for civilisation to develop in ever richer variety and strength to the endless benediction of mankind.

VII

A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND[1]

"Speak unto the Children of Israel, that they go forward."
—EXODUS xiv. 15

THESE words are taken from the narrative of the Exodus. The People of Israel had set forward with high hope on their journey to the Land of Promise, when they were suddenly encountered by an unexpected and most formidable check. Pharaoh's heart had hardened yet again. His pride had got the better of his fears, and led him to go back on his word. He would recall to bondage the slaves whom he had too rashly set free, and thus challenge yet once more the purpose of Jehovah. So it came about that the People of Israel had gone but a little way on their

[1] Preached in Durham Cathedral on New Year's Day, 1928.

journey before they learned that the Tyrant was following hard after them with a mighty host. They were filled with terror, and disposed to turn angrily on the leaders who had brought them into so disastrous a situation. Then to Moses, as he prayed in his desperate need for Divine direction, there came the message : " Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

This morning, as we stand on the threshold of a New Year, I choose these words of resolute courage as the message which I desire to address to you, and through you to the Church of England. We have been moving forward for some years past in the difficult but indispensable work of adapting our ecclesiastical system, (which we have received substantially unchanged from the sixteenth century,) to the needs of our own time : and, just when we seemed to be on the verge of a great achievement, our hopes have been dashed, and we have been roughly bidden to cast aside the results of our long labours, and to return to the situation which

had become intolerable. What course ought we as a Church to pursue? How ought we to interpret this cruel disappointment? How ought we to handle this difficult situation? In the first place, we must be careful to avoid the language of exaggeration, and to make sure that we have understood rightly what has happened. The House of Commons, in rejecting the Revised Prayer Book, has exercised its unquestionable right, and, if we refuse to accept its decision as expressing its deliberate verdict, it is because the circumstances in which that decision was reached went far to rob it of its proper significance. The debate was strangely ill-informed and inadequate. It was carried on in an atmosphere of emotional excitement extremely unfavourable to deliberation. Sacramental doctrines, requiring for their reasonable discussion a measure of exact knowledge which the principal speakers showed no evidence of possessing, and which it had been a leading purpose of the Enabling Act to exclude for ever from the Parliamentary arena, were

handled with the vehemence of conviction and the crude dogmatism of ignorance. The vote itself was morally discounted by the fact that the hostile majority was composed of Scottish, Welsh, and Irish Members, whose concern with the English Prayer Book was slight and indirect. In view of all these circumstances, few considering citizens will be disposed to question the reasonableness of the Archbishops' refusal to "take the responsibility of accepting as final the vote of December 15th." For the moment, therefore, our course is clear. It has been indicated authoritatively by the Archbishops. We shall seek to give the House of Commons the opportunity of reversing its action by sending back the Revised Book without alteration save (to use their Graces' language) "such changes only as may tend to remove misapprehensions and to make clearer and more explicit its intentions and limitations." So much we ought to do, so much and no more. We cannot, and we will not, do anything which will justify the dishonouring state-

ment, already freely made in many quarters, that a majority of the House of Commons can determine the doctrine and worship of the Church of England.

The immediate problem, then, has been solved by agreeing to postpone the crucial issue. But that issue remains, and it is our plain duty to face it. In every devout Churchman's mind, the question has been raised, and must be answered: Can the existing connexion between Church and State in England—which is conveniently called Establishment—be rightly maintained, since it can involve the Church in such an experience as that which we have just traversed? If, as a consequence of the action of the House of Commons, the revised Prayer Book shall be rejected, either through failure to carry it again through the ecclesiastical assemblies, or through a second hostile vote in Parliament, could it be fairly denied that the Church of England is subordinated to the State in a degree inconsistent with its self-respect as a Christian society? Should we

not be required by our principles to repudiate, at whatever cost, a connexion with the State which so plainly shackled our indispensable liberty! The language of the Archbishops appears to contemplate such a contingency:

"The Bishops fully recognise that there are circumstances in which it would be their duty to take action in accordance with the Church's inherent spiritual authority. We realise this duty and are ready, if need be, to fulfil it."

Their Graces do in these words express the deliberate judgment of the Bishops. It is important that we should all appreciate the meaning of such language. It cannot but mean that the Church, if the Bishops have rightly expressed its mind, does not wish to be established if establishment involves subjection to the State in such indubitably spiritual matters as the Form of its Liturgy, and the method by which it provides for the spiritual needs of the sick and dying.

Did the Members of the House of Commons realise that they were subjecting the immemorial connexion between Church and

State in England to an excessive strain when they swept away as of no account the considered judgment of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church of England constitutionally expressed? It is not enough to say that the House had a legal right to do what it did. Had it a moral right? Establishment in England is a legacy from a very distant past, and certifies its antiquity by its anomalies. These have hitherto been acquiesced in because in practice they have not been found intolerable, and sometimes have even been confessedly beneficial. In fact they have served to express, and not to thwart or arrest, the deliberate will of the Church. The Enabling Act did undoubtedly disclose a growing impatience with this situation. The system worked too slowly for the ardour of reformers, and its anomalies could no longer count upon that kindly interpretation, which was indispensable if they were not to be found offensive. The Act had the effect of emphasising the distinctiveness of Church and State, which marks the modern epoch, and thus

gave the aspect of direct collision to differences which previously might well have had a less decisive character. When the House of Commons swept aside as worthless the solemn assurances of the Bishops, and cancelled the work of the Convocations and the Church Assembly, it created a situation which no Church, least of all an Episcopal Church, could possibly accept. Hitherto Establishment has implied confidence and goodwill on the part of the State, not distrust and suspicion. On that assumption the Church could acquiesce in much for its work's sake. But if once that assumption should fail, the whole aspect of Establishment will have changed. Instead of friendly assistance it will imply hostile restraint. To remain established on such terms would be spiritual treason. The Church would be guilty of the criminal folly of selling its birthright for a mess of pottage. For in the history of Churches, as in the lives of individuals, there may come moments of crisis when a choice must be made between material interests and moral obligation, and

then all turns on the choice of the harder alternative.

No thoughtful citizen will speak lightly of Disestablishment. Its immediate results could not but be extremely serious—a great reduction of the Church's material resources at a time when all religious work is hindered and hampered by poverty, an unavoidable restriction of the Church's pastoral work, especially in the rural districts, where already so many circumstances tend to impoverish and shadow the lives of the people, all that embitterment of feeling which must needs accompany so drastic a disturbance of the immemorial order of society, much individual distress and suffering. Its ulterior consequences would perhaps be even worse. The complete secularisation of the State would be formally achieved, and thereby a heavy blow struck at the prestige of Religion in English society, the confiscation of so much property would give a disastrous encouragement to predatory appetites, the stability of the social order would have received a ruinous shock

from which it might hardly recover. The Church would lose something more precious than its endowments, for, in becoming a voluntary denomination, it would run great risk of losing that largeness of spirit which national obligation has fostered, and would be more likely to fall under the influence of those narrowing forces which are the bane and shadow of denominational zeal. To my thinking the ill consequences of Disestablishment and its concomitant Disendowment would be so great that nothing short of the clearest moral obligation could justify an English Churchman, or a patriotic English citizen, in advocating it. But we must not, "*propter vitam perdere causas vivendi*," in order to preserve the Establishment forfeit the interests for which alone Establishment could be justified. The Church of England would cease to command the confidence of the other Churches of the Anglican Communion among which it holds a place of unique authority, and it would lose the respect of the nation if it failed to realise that such a

moral obligation will have plainly emerged if the action of the House of Commons should be maintained, and its implications affirmed, for it would thereby have been demonstrated to the world that the Church of England is unable to exercise its spiritual authority, and is acquiescing in a state of paralysing bondage to the English State.

We should miss the full lesson of our recent experience if we did not find in it matter for self-accusation and repentance. The untoward decision of the House of Commons had little relation to the issue with respect to which it was made, but it had a grave significance as disclosing the mischiefs which have flowed from the disorder within the Church of England. Not a debate, but an explosion of popular resentment was what happened in the House of Commons. That resentment had been gathering force for many years, and it had had but too sufficient justification in the behaviour, at once disloyal and autocratic, of many law-breaking

clergymen. It had found at last its opportunity of expression. We ought to take this grave fact to heart, and realise how wide a gulf has opened between the Church and nation. For that grievous fact the Church certainly cannot disclaim a large share of responsibility. The recognition of our own fault ought to mitigate our indignation, and predispose us to patience in the very difficult situation which has been so unexpectedly created. The cardinal issue of spiritual independence must finally determine the Church's action, but, in vindicating that supreme interest, we ought to be placable, accommodating, and magnanimous. The English nation is just, and the long record of its relations with the Church of England proves that it is religious. We shall be, and we ought to be, slow to believe that the precipitate action of one House of Parliament really discloses the deliberate purpose of the English people.

"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Penitent for the faults and

failures of the past, determined to be vigilant against them in the future, we take up as English Churchmen the burden of our Duty, and go forward in the assurance of Faith. Behind us are the centuries of our Church's record, every one luminous with the tokens of Divine Power, every one vocal with the affirmations of Divine Purpose. We cannot doubt that God is with us as He was with our fathers. If we be humble, constant, and loyal, we shall not lack guidance and strength.

VIII

THE PASSING OF NATIONAL CHURCHES

I

THE future of institutional Christianity is becoming uncertain. Dean Stanley once indulged the speculation whether the Christian religion was not destined to be ultimately severed from religious observances. Certainly the half-century which has elapsed since he did so has added plausibility to the notion, for the disintegrating factors which menace all settled habits and ordered institutions have gathered force, and now seem to endanger the cohesion of society itself. Not even the stoutest faith and the most resolute optimism can mistake the direction and effect of the new tendencies. Every assembly of representative Churchmen, as well Papist as

[1] *Nineteenth Century and After*, June, 1927.

Protestant, addresses itself to the disquieting symptoms of institutional decline which force themselves on its notice. The secularisation of the Lord's Day, the failure of candidates for the Christian ministry, the growing alienation of the educated classes, and the general repudiation of the traditional Christian morality in the cardinal matters of marriage and education, constitute for the Churches of Christendom a practical problem of the utmost urgency, of which the solution is hard to find. How far the Christian religion can be said to depend on the Christian Church is a question more easily asked than answered. The distinctive morality of the Gospel appears to require expression and exercise within a congruous society, and the Church has from the first attributed to the Sacraments an importance in the Christian life which implies their permanence. Yet modern society is becoming familiar with the spectacle of individual morality, confessedly in theory and intention Christian, which has no relation to membership in a Christian Church. The

history of Christianity is so full of surprises that no considering student will be disposed to dogmatise as to its probable future. Institutional Christianity may be destined to exhibit fresh developments which will renew the ancient harmony between the Church and the civilised communities within which it exists. For the present we have to contemplate a process of disintegration and decline, of which the logical conclusion is neither pleasant to contemplate nor possible to doubt. Whether it will be arrested by the emergence of new factors as yet unsuspected is a question which the future will be able to answer.

One famous type of ecclesiastical organisation has been brought into prominence by the debates on Prayer Book Revision, and the discussions in the country which they have occasioned. The Church of England is the most illustrious example of a national Church which the experience of Christianity has known. In Russia Christianity has been overwhelmed by the Revolution, and the

Church survives as a barely tolerated institution in a State which has degraded and despoiled it. In Sweden there still exists an established Church, which presents many features similar to those of the Church of England, but its comparative remoteness and smallness of extent deprive its fortunes of significance. When (and who will say that the contingency is either unlikely or distant ?) the Church of England shall have been disestablished and disendowed, the distinctive organisation of Christ's religion which it has exhibited will have failed in Christendom. It cannot be without interest to review the conditions under which that organisation came into existence, and the stages by which it has reached its present situation.

II

A national Church is a thought-provoking description. For how can a Church—which must needs express a universal religion, the religion of Christ—be brought into the

category of national institutions? If the catholicity of the religion be expressed in the ecclesiastical system which embodies it, then the apparent conflict takes a concrete form. How does membership of the Catholic Church harmonise with membership of the Church which is national? Can the larger obligation consist with the nearer allegiance? When a conflict emerges, what authority is competent to decide the issue? Christian history certifies the fact and the gravity of the paradox inherent in the idea of a national Church.

Christianity is a universal religion. The truths which it proclaims, and the morality which it requires, are meant for "all sorts and conditions of men." But historically Christianity has had to make its way in a human society which is almost infinitely various. Accordingly, the universal religion has come to present a strangely variegated aspect. There are certain universal factors which give it a recognisable identity, but the differences are very great, so great that the

fellowship of its professors has been broken up, to all appearance irreparably.

The influence of locality began to operate from the first. Distinctiveness of emphasis, tone, and habit began to mark the spiritual society. As the Church extended, this factor could not but become more important. The original influences working from the centre were weakened by distance, and by the isolation which distance necessitated. The *genius loci* told subtly on Christian minds, and shaped Christian habits, so that, very early in Christian history, the one Church exhibited varieties of worship, discipline, and even belief. Within the still unbroken fellowship of the imperial Church divergent types of Christianity reflected racial idiosyncrasy, specific conditions of life, distinctive political traditions, and various levels of culture. The Christianity of Rome was not identical with that of Alexandria, nor that of Antioch with that of Constantinople. These differences fitted on to all manner of secular interests, both strengthening them and receiving

strength from them. Language added a potent element making for dissidence. The Eastern Church spoke Greek, the Western Church Latin ; and, later, within the Latin world, the vernacular languages of modern Europe brought fresh forces of disintegration into history.

From the first there was a tendency to make the ecclesiastical system conform to the existing political arrangements. Civic convenience coincided with public policy to facilitate the process. In Mommsen's striking phrase, " the conquering Christian Church took its hierarchic weapons from the arsenal of the enemy." [1] The conversion of Constantine stimulated this tendency. Ecclesiastical and civil arrangements were closely conformed. The organisation of the Roman State religion provided a precedent for the imperial Church, and may even have formed the framework into which the ecclesiastical system of established Christianity was fitted. How far this was the case is a disputed point among

[1] *v.* " Provinces of the Roman Empire," Vol. I, p. 349.

students of antiquity, but that the influence of the pagan hierarchy on its Christian successor was considerable cannot be reasonably questioned. The Papacy, as Hobbes said, is "the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting crowned on the tomb thereof."

"The modelling of the Church on the organisation of the imperial cult grew more intimate as the decades passed, and the resemblance between them stronger when the recognition of the Christian religion by the State gave the leaders of the Church more opportunities. The pagan title of *Pontifex Maximus*, applied in scorn by Tertullian in the beginning of the third century to an overweening bishop of Rome, was appropriated by the Christian bishop of the capital and still remains, and with it the implied claim to be the ruler over the whole religious administration of the empire. The vestments of the clergy, unknown in those early centuries—dalmatic, chasuble, stole and maniple—were all taken over by the Christian clergy from the Roman magistracy; the word *Bull*, to denote a papal rescript, was borrowed from the old imperial administration.[1]

It is hardly excessive to say that the imperial Church was a replica of the imperial

[1] *v.* T. M. Lindsay, "The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries," p. 353. See especially Chap. VIII, "The Roman State Religion and Its Effects on the Organisation of the Church."

State: and when the empire ceased to be a unit, the division of East and West, at first political, became almost inevitably ecclesiastical also. When the Roman Empire in the West fell before the attacks of the Teutonic barbarians, the ecclesiastical system was powerfully affected. The Church was feudalised as well as the State. The tribe and the nation gained suitable ecclesiastical expression. Thus the original bishoprics of the English conversion were the heptarchic kingdoms, and the see was in some instances the capital. When Theodore organised the Church of England in the seventh century, he broke up these great bishoprics, but "in doing so, he followed the lines of the still existing territorial or tribal arrangements which had preceded the creation of the seven kingdoms."[1]

The tribal and national units were absorbed in the system of the mediæval Church, which took the aspect of a religious version of feudal society. Over against the secular

[1] Stubbs, "Constitutional History," Vol. I. pp. 224ff.

hierarchy, which had its supreme overlord in the Holy Roman Emperor, stood the spiritual hierarchy, which had its supreme overlord in the Holy Roman Pope. Christendom was literally conceived of as the Kingdom of God on earth in which Christ carried on His government through His two vicars, the Pope and the Emperor. Ideally these vicars were in perfect accord, but actually the delimiting of their spheres of authority became the cause of fierce and continuing conflict. The conception of a Christendom was a very noble one, and appealed to the best minds of the Middle Ages; but it enshrined a paradox, and, therefore, could not possibly succeed. There is something movingly suggestive about the fact, which Eginhard states, that Charlemagne delighted in the books of St. Augustine, and among them especially in the *De Civitate Dei*. "It is not too much to say," writes Bryce, "that the Holy Empire was built upon the foundation of the *De Civitate Dei*."[1] The Middle Ages luxuriated

[1] *v.* "Holy Roman Empire," p. 93.

in theories, but they remained theories: "at no time in the world's history has theory professing all the while to control practice been so utterly divorced from it."[1]

III

Nationality was a disruptive factor within Christendom which finally broke up both the Holy Roman Empire and the spiritual empire of the Holy Roman Pope. In the process of disintegration we can distinguish at least five factors:

(*a*) The development of national self-consciousness, expressed particularly in the growth of national language and literature.

(*b*) The resentment of independent monarchies against the political interference of the Papacy.

(*c*) The revolt of incipient patriotism against the ignoring or injuring of national interests by the Papacy. During the long conflict with France the circumstance that

[1] *v.* "Holy Roman Empire," p. 118.

the Papacy was resident at Avignon and plainly controlled by the French monarchy added force to this revolt, which found its most effective exponents in Wycliffe and Huss.

(*d*) The resistance of the national hierarchy to the central authority of the Papacy. The clergy, too, were patriots, and they shared the common sentiments, which added strength to specific grievances of their own.

(*e*) The dislike of financial exactions, which tended to become larger precisely as the reason for them became less respectable. The Great Schism doubled or even trebled the cost of the papal system, and the effect was necessarily felt in the increased exactions of the Curia.

The process of national alienation was clothed with moral authority by its association with the demand, which became irresistible at the close of the Middle Ages, for the reform of the Church. It is certainly significant that the great reforming Council

of Constance was organised on a national basis. The Conciliar Reformation failed because it did not go deep enough, and because it was premature. Nationality was not yet strong enough for the work of recasting Christendom. Italian statecraft, playing on the distinctive interests of the monarchs, was able to defeat the General Councils. Another century of progressive decline was needed before the moral bankruptcy of the mediæval system could be demonstrated, and then the Reformation came "in the fulness of the time." The reformers not only purged the hierarchical system, but also carried the critical spirit of the Renaissance into the religious sphere, and brought into recognition the original Christianity of the New Testament. When once the central authority of the Pope had been challenged and repudiated, the principal restraint on the development of national varieties of religion was removed, and the existence of independent national Churches became possible. There was no longer any reason why national interests and

ideals should not identify themselves frankly with national religion. The identification was both natural and morally perilous. It was assisted by that tendency to conform the ecclesiastical system to the civil, which, as we have shown, operated from the earliest period of Christian history. The political independence of the nation expressed itself in the spiritual independence of the national Church. Mediæval Christendom bequeathed to the modern epoch the notion of a territorial basis for the Christian Church. The principle which had determined the existence of Christendom now operated within the limited area of the nation. "*Cujus regio ejus religio*" was no invention of the Lutherans. It inspired the religious policy of the Hohenstaufen emperors as truly as that of the Tudor monarchs and the German princes. When the unity of Christendom was broken up by the emergence of national States, it was obvious that the Christian society would be organised in national Churches. "*Cujus regio ejus religio*" was as much the description

of a fact as the enunciation of a principle. Nor may we leave out of our reckoning the new influence of the Bible, for there, in the Old Testament, the reformers found the description of a complete national Church, an organised theocracy, commended by an authority which they held to be Divine, which they assumed to extend to their own case, and which they accepted as a model for their own procedure. Here was nationality vindicated and elevated to the level of a religious principle. Moreover, in the sixteenth century national sentiment expressed itself everywhere through monarchical institutions. The absoluteness of the king meant the complete independence of his kingship from external claims of the Holy Roman Pope, or of his rather shadowy comrade the Holy Roman Emperor. Here in the Old Testament was the model of kingship ordained and organised by God Himself on the familiar and, in all Teutonic communities, cherished principle of hereditary right. Reformers of the Church, patriotic nationalists, monarchs

raising the fabric of despotic power on the complex system of an earlier time, all found in the Old Testament what they wanted.

"In a word," writes the most eminent exponent of Elizabethan Anglicanism, Richard Hooker, "our estate is according to the pattern of God's own ancient elect people, which people was not part of them the Commonwealth and part of them the Church of God; but the self-same people whole and entire were both under one chief governor, on whose supreme authority they did all depend."

In the second Anglican canon of 1604 excommunication *ipso facto* is pronounced against everyone who affirms "that the King's Majesty hath not the same authority in causes ecclesiastical that the godly kings had amongst the Jews and Christian emperors of the primitive Church."

"Your Majesty," said Archbishop Cranmer, addressing the little boy whom he was about to crown as King of England, "is God's vice-regent and Christ's vicar within your own dominions, and to see, with your predecessor Josiah, God truly worshipped and idolatry destroyed, the tyranny of the Bishops of Rome banished from your subjects, and images removed. These acts be signs of a second Josiah, who reformed the Church of God in his days."

IV

The territorial basis of a national Church was challenged by the policy of Toleration. That policy was born of the practical exigencies of secular government, not by the growth of charity among Christians. Persecution had its citadel in religious conviction, and its latest champions in religious zealots. *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*

When religious conviction had been replaced in the minds of rulers by the cool and considering temper of statecraft, the stupidity and wastefulness of persecution stood out in naked prominence. The politiques, who came into existence during the religious wars in France, and found their most conspicuous representative in Henry IV., held that "the half loaf of toleration was better, in fact, than the famine of anarchy." They saw clearly that nothing short of anarchy was the outcome of the furious and immitigable strife of religious enthusiasts.

"They were modern, legal, and liberal in spirit.

As against those who had attempted, under the guise of 'the religion,' a recrudescence of feudalism, and as against those who under the name of the Holy Union were preaching disunion, and under cover of a zeal for religion were erecting on the ruins of the ancient royalty a monarchy by grace of the Paris mob, Pasquier, Bodin, and the rest stood out as partisans of the State. They were accused naturally of Machiavellism; and there was so much of justice in the charge, that their desire for toleration was based solely on expediency, though this included motives of humanity: they did not regard religion as beyond the province of State action."[1]

The comparative absence of persecution in England under Elizabeth was due to the great Queen's political sagacity. Her hard, clear understanding could perceive much which her more sincerely religious contemporaries failed to see. Henry IV thought Paris worth a mass, and by his cynicism secured more for the French Huguenots than Coligny could secure by his sword, or Beza by his pen. The Church followed slowly and reluctantly in the wake of the State. Religious toleration in England was conceded grudgingly,

[1] *v.* Figgis in "Cambridge Modern History," Vol. III, p. 753.

and the violence done to the theory of the national Church was obscured by the attempt to limit it in the Act of Toleration to those who professed themselves agreed with the Church in doctrine. This limitation, however, could not possibly be maintained, for the political reasons for tolerating orthodox dissenters were equally relevant to the case of dissenters who were not orthodox. Quakers, Unitarians, and Roman Catholics would not make even the mitigated subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles which the Toleration Act (1689) required. Special arrangements were made for the Quakers and Moravians: the penal laws were allowed to remain unenforced against Roman Catholics; and Unitarians were ignored, until the spread of Deism absorbed them in a larger and vaguer description. The national Church was so plainly dominant, that the defect in its title implied by the existence of legally tolerated dissidents passed unheeded.

Undoubtedly the Civil War, with its tragic *dénouement* in the judicial murder of the

king in 1649, and its sequel in the Puritan domination, associated religious toleration with political danger in the minds of average Englishmen, and thereby delayed the victory of humanity, and prolonged the reign of religious bigotry.

Toleration was a risky experiment in the view of practical men who disliked persecution, and were anything but zealots for orthodoxy.

"That no toleration should be given outside the Church of England was an obvious principle sanctioned by immemorial custom; if once that principle were infringed it would be by no means easy to find a new and satisfactory bulwark against the irruptions of Popery, fanaticism, and infidelity. As a contemporary rhymester expressed it:

"'The starry rule of Heaven is fixt,
There's no dissension in the sky:
And can there be a mean betwixt
Confusion and Conformity?
A place divided never thrives:
'Tis bad where hornets dwell in hives,
But worse where children play with knives.'"[1]

After 1689 the Church of England (and the

[1] A. A. Seaton, "The Theory of Toleration under the Later Stuarts," p. 203 (Cambridge University Press).

same, *mutatis mutandis*, was the case with the Church of Scotland) was confessedly no longer the religious equivalent of the nation of England, as the law had assumed, and as Hooker had maintained. It included in its membership no longer the nation, but that majority of the nation which did not avail itself of the legal permission to withdraw from the Church's communion. In principle, though not yet in acknowledged fact, the national Church rested on the basis of voluntary choice.

V

Religious toleration shook the basis of Establishment, but the challenge of democracy was more formidable. So long as the nation expressed itself through the monarchy, its religious character was determined by the monarch's personal will. Under the masterful Tudors the Church of England was, within the short space of a single generation, Roman, Anglo-Catholic, Protestant, Roman

again, and then a mitigated version of Protestant. Of Kitchin, Bishop of Llandaff, who held his see through all the changes, and after renouncing the Pope under Henry, repudiating the Mass under Edward, and burning a Protestant under Mary, was willing to officiate at the coronation of Elizabeth, the gibe passed on the lips of his contemporaries that he followed the psalmist's counsel, and ever sang to the Lord a *new* song. His conduct, however, was as representative as it was unedifying. This complaisance reflected the changing convictions of Henry VIII and his children, and was only rendered possible by the fact that the nation had no other organ of effective self-expression than the national monarch. Obviously this situation could not continue. The quickly developing self-consciousness of the English nation found other and better instruments for uttering its mind; and when Charles I sought to renew in the middle of the seventeenth century the policy which had passed unchallenged in the middle of the sixteenth,

he learned to his cost that the spirit of self-directing liberty, strengthened and consecrated by Calvinism, had so penetrated the public mind that the monarch's will was no longer strong enough to determine the religious policy of the nation. A national Church must henceforward be at least so far harmonious with the national spirit that its system and influence can secure the nation's approval or (at lowest) acquiescence. Every approach to complete democracy implied the logical necessity of making the national Church a truer reflection of the national religion. So long as the masses lay outside the Constitution, and had no effective means of self-expression, their religion or irreligion could be safely ignored. The Church of England reflected the beliefs and desires of the politically dominant sections of the people —that is, the upper and middle classes. The nation was identified with the governing minority, and the national Church conformed itself automatically to the new situation. It became the servant of the governing minority,

and consecrated the existing system. Its business was to develop in the people a patriotism of acquiescence. When in the reign of George II charity schools were established for the education of the poor, Gibson, Bishop of London, exerted himself to make sure that they were means to this end. In 1724 he summoned the masters and mistresses to come to him, and addressed to them a notable charge, defining their duty and laying down rules for their guidance. The children were to be made "sensible of the sinfulness of disturbing government, and of the folly as well as sinfulness of meddling with matters which did not belong to them." The range of education was straitly limited to such elementary subjects as would "prepare children to be good Christians and good servants." The governing minority of the eighteenth century were wrapped in the comfortable delusion that the Revolution of 1688 was the last word in democracy, and resented as something akin to profanity the notion that their own monopoly of power, and the

good things that power makes possible, could ever be challenged by patriotic citizens. They could not understand why a system which suited them so well should not be equally satisfactory to everybody else.[1] When, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, education was extended to the poor, it was carefully guarded by religious instruction in the principles of the Established Church. Apart from this condition, popular education was looked upon with extreme suspicion. The national Church seemed to be the obvious instrument by which the educational policy of the State should be shaped and carried out. It was as a national Church that the Church of England undertook the gigantic task of educating the nation. Indeed, it is one of the oddities of our public life that the elementary schools which are connected with the Church of England are specifically designated "national schools," and the principal instrument by which the battle with the State on behalf of religious

[1] Cf. Sykes, "Edmund Gibson," p. 204.

education is being fought is the "national society."

Democracy developed rapidly. Citizenship was by successive stages completely secularised, save for the circumstance that it carried responsibility for the maintenance and control of an Established Church. Successive Franchise Acts have brought practically the entire adult population of both sexes within the Constitution. The question inevitably suggests itself, How far can the nation be regarded as Christian? Citizenship is in theory divorced from the Christian profession. What is it in fact? If it should appear that the majority of the citizens are no longer in any effective sense Christians, what meaning is left in the phrase "a national Church"? What is the actual significance of Establishment in a practically secularist State? Secularism may be benevolent towards the Christian Church, or it may be hostile: can Establishment exist, and be tolerable, in a hostile community? The mere asking of such questions discloses the extra-

ordinary difficulty of the present situation within historic Christendom. It is obvious that the paradox implicit in the very conception of a national Church—to which we adverted in our opening sentences—leaps into view, and takes an aspect at once perplexing and minatory, in the circumstances of the modern world. The Christian religion, being essentially Divine and coming to men with Divine right to their acceptance, has claims of its own, which may conflict with the requirements of secularised democracy, and no Church, whether national or other, can ignore or repudiate those Divine claims without falling into spiritual treason, perhaps, without committing spiritual suicide. Churches, like individuals, may have "to lose themselves to gain themselves." Their heavenly franchise may be like the centurion's citizenship, something which must be purchased "with a great sum." No doubt the thoroughgoing individualist, and the thoroughgoing institutionalist, each in his own way, can "cut the Gordian knot" which

modern democracy is presenting to organised Christianity; but their contrasted solutions create other problems perhaps even more intractable than the difficult problem which they solve. Neither the Quaker nor the Papist can answer the questions which past history and present experience are proposing.

VI

I have assumed that a Church must be conceived of as the instrument by means of which the religion of Christ is brought to bear directly and confessedly on human life, that it is itself an association of men and believers who profess themselves Christians. But I do not forget that the word has been more widely understood. Coleridge extended it far beyond a distinct religious reference. His words are, perhaps, worth quoting:

"The Clerisy of the nation, or national Church, in its primary acceptation and original intention, comprehended the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence, of medicine

and physiology, of music, of military and civil architecture, of the physical sciences, with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding; in short, all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilisation of a country as well as the theological. The last was, indeed, placed at the head of all, and of good right did it claim the precedence. But why? Because under the name of theology or divinity were contained the interpretation of languages, the conservation and tradition of past events, the momentous epochs and revolutions of the race and nation, the continuation of the records, logic, ethics, and the determination of ethical science in application to the rights and duties of men in all their various relations, social and civil; and lastly, the ground-knowledge, the *prima scientia* as it was named—philosophy, or the doctrine and discipline of ideas."[1]

Coleridge's famous contemporary, Thomas Arnold, reaffirmed Hooker's identification of Church and nation, being led to do so, not by scriptural precedent nor by the logical implication of the actually existing system, but by his profound disbelief in hierarchical claims on the one hand, and by his lofty notion of the State's functions on the other. To Arnold, as Dr. Campbell has said in a

[1] "On the Constitution of Church and State," 1852.

recent study, "*Church-State and State-Church would be equivalent conceptions.*" But Arnold belonged to a generation of which the groundtones were still religious. Had he been confronted by the "neutral" State, which is the confessed ideal of modern democrats, he could hardly have allowed such free course to his idealising fancy. Neither the "*Church-State*" of the Middle Ages nor the "*State-Church*" of the Reformation can make good a claim to the acceptance of democratic communities in such a world as we live in. As against the modern tendency to idealise the Middle Ages, and to contrast the range and variety of clerical activity then with the petty scale on which modern Churches operate, it is important that we should remember that many of the functions of the modern State were once included in the scheme of the Church's work. Therefore, any fair comparison between the Middle Ages and our own time must take account of much more than the sum of denominational effort.

But we are not concerned with so large a

definition of the Church as that which Coleridge proposed. We cannot thus identify it with the higher life of civilisation, the sum of art, literature, science and morality: we mean a society organised specifically for the public profession and effective realisation of the Christian religion, and by a national Church we mean such a society as can make out an intelligible claim to be regarded as national. We can distinguish at least four types of national Church, which we set down in the order of their appearance in history:

I. *That portion of the Catholic hierarchy which exists within a nation*, and alone represents the Christian society within it. In this sense the ancient and the mediæval Churches were national—that is, federations of national Churches.

II. *The nation itself regarded as constituting a Church.* This was simply the mediæval theory expressed in terms of national independence. Its principle was territorial, and its most complete expression was in England,

where Richard Hooker formulated the theory of such a national Church.

III. *A Christian denomination recognised by the State, and clothed with specific functions and privileges*, amongst which the tenure of the ancient religious endowments of the nation is the most considerable. Historically this is the form which the national Church received when religious toleration had become accepted as a condition of government.

IV. *All the Christian people within the nation, however organised, who maintain a public profession of Christ's religion*, and bring the principles of the Gospel to bear effectively on the national life. This is the form which a national Church must receive when national recognition, with the consequent obligations and privileges, has been withdrawn, and the State has become confessedly secular. In the United States of America there is no State Church, but it would be impossible to deny that there exists, though in a disordered and unorganised shape, a national Church. The Federation of Christian Churches, which

includes all the non-Roman denominations, has gone some way towards providing an organisation for the national Christianity.

VII

National interest in the national Churches has declined so rapidly in recent years, and especially since the outbreak of the Great War, which dwarfed into pettiness most domestic issues, that it is hard to say whether Establishment retains any practical importance. In 1919 the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act, commonly called "the Enabling Act," became law; and in 1921 it was followed by the Church of Scotland Act. These Acts may, I think, be justly regarded as in principle Acts of disestablishment, for both have the character of renunciations of the ecclesiastical responsibilities of the State, which in both countries is no longer sufficiently interested in the national Churches to be able to concern itself acceptably in their affairs. In fact, the national Churches

have shrivelled into denominations within the nations. Disestablishment *eo nomine* is postponed because it would necessitate also disendowment, and that process raises practical problems very difficult to solve. So, for the present, on both sides of the Tweed the venerable fiction of national Establishment persists.

There is another consideration which cannot be omitted. The triumph of democracy in the sphere of politics has synchronised with a profound change in human interests. It is a truism to say that the dividing lines of political parties are now mainly determined by economic issues. Organised "Labour" does not concern itself with the questions on which politicians have in the past contended. They care less and less for liberty; more and more for equality. Democracy implies the achievement of the former, but the effort to achieve the latter raises moral issues which the Christian Church cannot ignore or avoid. It is profoundly significant that both in France in the eighteenth century, and in

Russia in the twentieth, revolution has disclosed a bitterly anti-Christian tendency. In both countries there have been amiable visionaries who have imagined that a concordat between revolution and Christianity is possible. The so-called constitutional Church in France and the so-called "living Church" in Russia indicate the reluctance with which immitigable discord is acknowledged. But nothing less appears to be inevitable, unless Christianity is to divest itself of its Divine authority and sink into the humble servant of the popular will. The class-war is the precise repudiation of Christianity, and the State which grows from it will of necessity be an anti-Christian State. Is the Christian society destined to traverse again the once familiar cycle of isolation, conflict, finally persecution? In view of the French and Russian precedents, it is not very easy to find an answer which shall be both probable and satisfactory. For our present purpose it suffices to indicate the formidable character of the new situations in which the

Churches may probably find themselves in the not remote future. The shadow of the coming trial is already falling on Christendom, and as men come under it they find themselves looking on an altered landscape. Many things that once looked considerable have fallen into obscurity, and in the waning light only the main structures stand out clearly. Denominational claims, shibboleths, even vested interests, have now an aspect of almost intolerable pettiness, and the Christian discipleship rises above them in a majesty that prohibits rivalry and confusion. The national Church of the future cannot be less than the ordered and operative fellowship of all who are ready to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in the teeth of the forces of a de-Christianised Christendom.

THE END